

US Patent & Trademark Office

Patent Public Search | Text View

United States Patent Application Publication

20250257818

Kind Code

A1

Publication Date

August 14, 2025

Inventor(s)

Woody; Rhett Douglas Larry et al.

LOCKABLE PIPE SHIELD

Abstract

A lockable pipe shield includes a substantially curved shield body defining a first upper shield edge and a second upper shield edge opposite the first upper shield edge; a first lock tab formed monolithically with the shield body at the first upper shield edge and bent relative to the shield body to extend in a first direction, a first hanger engagement channel defined between the first lock tab and shield body; and a second lock tab formed monolithically with the shield body at the second upper shield edge and bent relative to the shield body to extend in a second direction substantially opposite the first direction, a second hanger engagement channel defined between the second lock tab and the shield body.

Inventors: Woody; Rhett Douglas Larry (Jackson, TN), Scott; Stephen Eric (North Kingstown, RI), Thornley, II; Michael T. (Johnston, RI), Parkhurst; Colin Edward (Coventry, RI)

Applicant: ASC Engineered Solutions, LLC (Oak Brook, IL)

Family ID: 1000008561440

Appl. No.: 18/903730

Filed: October 01, 2024

Related U.S. Application Data

parent US continuation 18110253 20230215 parent-grant-document US 12104726 child US 18903730

parent US continuation 17332588 20210527 parent-grant-document US 11608913 child US 18110253

Publication Classification

Int. Cl.: F16L3/10 (20060101); A62C35/68 (20060101); F16L3/11 (20060101)

Background/Summary

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS [0001] The present application is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 18/110,253, filed Feb. 15, 2023, which is a continuation of U.S. application Ser. No. 17/332,588, filed May 27, 2021, which are hereby specifically incorporated by reference herein in their entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] This disclosure relates to hanging pipes. More specifically, this disclosure relates to a pipe support assembly with a lockable pipe shield.

BACKGROUND

[0003] Pipes, such as water pipes in a building for sprinkler systems or residential or commercial water use, can be suspended from ceilings by pipe support assemblies. The pipes are sometimes sheathed in insulation to maintain certain temperatures of fluid within the pipe, such as hot or cold water lines or environments where temperatures can risk freezing fluid within the pipe. Pipe support assemblies typically comprise a hanger, such as a clevis hanger, and can comprise include a pipe insulation shield cradled by the hanger and supporting the insulation and the pipe. The pipe insulation shield also serves to distribute the load on the hanger so that the weight of the pipe does not crush the insulation, which is often fiberglass or similar compressible materials, at the hanger. The pipe shield can slip on the hanger, particularly during expansion and/or contraction cycles or when subjected to vibrations, such as vibrations due to seismic events or everyday vibrations from foot traffic, machine vibrations, or vibrations from fluid flow and water hammer in the pipes themselves. Some pipe shield comprise restraint features at the bottom of the pipe shield intended to reduce slipping. However, the bottom of the pipe shield is load-bearing and the restraint features can damage the insulation and/or the pipe supported thereon.

SUMMARY

[0004] It is to be understood that this summary is not an extensive overview of the disclosure. This summary is exemplary and not restrictive, and it is intended to neither identify key or critical elements of the disclosure nor delineate the scope thereof. The sole purpose of this summary is to explain and exemplify certain concepts of the disclosure as an introduction to the following complete and extensive detailed description.

[0005] Disclosed is a lockable pipe shield for a pipe support assembly, the lockable pipe shield comprising a substantially semi-cylindrical shield body defining a first shield end, a second shield end opposite the first shield end, and an upper shield edge; and a lock tab coupled to the shield body at the upper shield edge, the lock tab bendable relative to the shield body between a first position and a second position, wherein, in the first position, the lockable pipe shield is in an unlocked configuration, and in the second position, the lockable pipe shield is in a locked configuration.

[0006] Also disclosed is a pipe support assembly comprising a pipe hanger defining a lower hanger end and a hanger arm, the hanger arm defining a side edge; and a lockable pipe shield comprising a shield body and a lock tab, the shield body supported on the lower hanger end of the pipe hanger, the lock tab bendable around the side edge of the hanger arm to secure the lockable pipe shield to the pipe hanger.

[0007] A method of securing a lockable pipe shield to a pipe hanger is disclosed, the method comprising supporting a lower shield end of the lockable pipe shield on a lower hanger end of the

pipe hanger, the pipe hanger comprising a hanger arm defining a first side edge and a second side edge; bending a first lock tab of the lockable pipe shield around the first side edge of the hanger arm, the lockable pipe shield defining an upper shield end distal to the lower shield end, the first lock tab adjacent to the upper shield end; and bending a second lock tab of the lockable pipe shield around the second side edge of the hanger arm towards the first lock tab, the second lock tab adjacent to the upper shield end.

[0008] Also disclosed is a lockable pipe shield comprising a substantially curved shield body defining a first upper shield edge and a second upper shield edge opposite the first upper shield edge; a first lock tab formed monolithically with the shield body at the first upper shield edge and bent relative to the shield body to extend in a first direction, a first hanger engagement channel defined between the first lock tab and shield body; and a second lock tab formed monolithically with the shield body at the second upper shield edge and bent relative to the shield body to extend in a second direction substantially opposite the first direction, a second hanger engagement channel defined between the second lock tab and the shield body.

[0009] Additionally, disclosed is a pipe support assembly comprising a substantially U-shaped pipe hanger defining a first side edge and a second side edge opposite the first side edge, the pipe hanger comprising a front hanger arm and a rear hanger arm opposite the front hanger arm; and a lockable pipe shield comprising a shield body, a first lock tab, and a second lock tab, wherein the first lock tab is bent around the front hanger arm at the first side edge and the second lock tab is bent around the rear hanger arm at the second side edge to secure the lockable pipe shield to the pipe hanger; wherein an outer shield surface of the lockable pipe shield confronts an inner hanger surface of the pipe hanger

[0010] Various implementations described in the present disclosure may include additional systems, methods, features, and advantages, which may not necessarily be expressly disclosed herein but will be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art upon examination of the following detailed description and accompanying drawings. It is intended that all such systems, methods, features, and advantages be included within the present disclosure and protected by the accompanying claims. The features and advantages of such implementations may be realized and obtained by means of the systems, methods, features particularly pointed out in the appended claims. These and other features will become more fully apparent from the following description and appended claims, or may be learned by the practice of such exemplary implementations as set forth hereinafter.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] The features and components of the following figures are illustrated to emphasize the general principles of the present disclosure. The drawings are not necessarily drawn to scale. Corresponding features and components throughout the figures may be designated by matching reference characters for the sake of consistency and clarity.

[0012] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a lockable pipe shield according to one aspect of the present disclosure.

[0013] FIG. 2 is a close-up view of a lock tab of the lockable pipe shield of FIG. 1, taken from Detail A of FIG. 1.

[0014] FIG. 3 is a close-up view of the lock tab of FIG. 2, taken from Detail A of FIG. 1, illustrating example dimensions thereof.

[0015] FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the lockable pipe shield of FIG. 1 assembled with a pipe hanger and in an unlocked configuration, in accordance with another aspect of the present disclosure, wherein the lockable pipe shield and the pipe hanger together define a pipe support

assembly.

[0016] FIG. 5 is a front view of pipe support assembly of FIG. 4 with the lockable pipe shield in a locked configuration.

[0017] FIG. 6 illustrates a right side view of pipe support assembly supporting insulation and a pipe.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0018] The present disclosure can be understood more readily by reference to the following detailed description, examples, drawings, and claims, and the previous and following description. However, before the present devices, systems, and/or methods are disclosed and described, it is to be understood that this disclosure is not limited to the specific devices, systems, and/or methods disclosed unless otherwise specified, and, as such, can, of course, vary. It is also to be understood that the terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular aspects only and is not intended to be limiting.

[0019] The following description is provided as an enabling teaching of the present devices, systems, and/or methods in its best, currently known aspect. To this end, those skilled in the relevant art will recognize and appreciate that many changes can be made to the various aspects of the present devices, systems, and/or methods described herein, while still obtaining the beneficial results of the present disclosure. It will also be apparent that some of the desired benefits of the present disclosure can be obtained by selecting some of the features of the present disclosure without utilizing other features. Accordingly, those who work in the art will recognize that many modifications and adaptations to the present disclosure are possible and can even be desirable in certain circumstances and are a part of the present disclosure. Thus, the following description is provided as illustrative of the principles of the present disclosure and not in limitation thereof.

[0020] As used throughout, the singular forms “a,” “an” and “the” include plural referents unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. Thus, for example, reference to “an element” can include two or more such elements unless the context indicates otherwise.

[0021] Ranges can be expressed herein as from “about” one particular value, and/or to “about” another particular value. When such a range is expressed, another aspect includes from the one particular value and/or to the other particular value. Similarly, when values are expressed as approximations, by use of the antecedent “about,” it will be understood that the particular value forms another aspect. It will be further understood that the endpoints of each of the ranges are significant both in relation to the other endpoint, and independently of the other endpoint.

[0022] For purposes of the current disclosure, a material property or dimension measuring about X or substantially X on a particular measurement scale measures within a range between X plus an industry-standard upper tolerance for the specified measurement and X minus an industry-standard lower tolerance for the specified measurement. Because tolerances can vary between different materials, processes and between different models, the tolerance for a particular measurement of a particular component can fall within a range of tolerances.

[0023] As used herein, the terms “optional” or “optionally” mean that the subsequently described event or circumstance can or cannot occur, and that the description includes instances where said event or circumstance occurs and instances where it does not.

[0024] The word “or” as used herein means any one member of a particular list and also includes any combination of members of that list. Further, one should note that conditional language, such as, among others, “can,” “could,” “might,” or “may,” unless specifically stated otherwise, or otherwise understood within the context as used, is generally intended to convey that certain aspects include, while other aspects do not include, certain features, elements and/or steps. Thus, such conditional language is not generally intended to imply that features, elements and/or steps are in any way required for one or more particular aspects or that one or more particular aspects necessarily include logic for deciding, with or without user input or prompting, whether these features, elements and/or steps are included or are to be performed in any particular aspect.

[0025] Disclosed are components that can be used to perform the disclosed methods and systems. These and other components are disclosed herein, and it is understood that when combinations, subsets, interactions, groups, etc. of these components are disclosed that while specific reference of each various individual and collective combinations and permutation of these may not be explicitly disclosed, each is specifically contemplated and described herein, for all methods and systems. This applies to all aspects of this application including, but not limited to, steps in disclosed methods. Thus, if there are a variety of additional steps that can be performed it is understood that each of these additional steps can be performed with any specific aspect or combination of aspects of the disclosed methods.

[0026] The use of the directional terms herein, such as right, left, front, rear, back, top, bottom, and the like can refer to the orientation shown and described in the corresponding figures, but these directional terms should not be considered limiting on the orientation or configuration required by the present disclosure. The use of ordinal terms herein, such as first, second, third, fourth, and the like can refer to elements associated with elements having matching ordinal numbers.

[0027] Disclosed is a pipe support assembly and associated methods, systems, devices, and various apparatus. Example aspects of the pipe support assembly can comprise a pipe hanger and lockable pipe shield. It would be understood by one of skill in the art that the pipe support assembly is described in but a few exemplary embodiments among many. No particular terminology or description should be considered limiting on the disclosure or the scope of any claims issuing therefrom.

[0028] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a lockable pipe shield **100**, in accordance with one aspect of the present disclosure. In example aspects, the lockable pipe shield **100** can be a lockable pipe insulation shield **105**, as described in further detail below with respect to FIG. 6. According to example aspects, the lockable pipe shield **100** can be substantially semi-cylindrical in shape or otherwise curved or shaped to match a curve of a pipe **610** (shown in FIG. 6) and insulation **620** (shown in FIG. 6). For example, the lockable pipe shield **100** can comprise a shield body **110** defining a substantially semi-cylindrical outer shield surface **112** and a substantially semi-cylindrical inner shield surface **114** opposite the outer shield surface **112**. The shield body **110** can define a first shield end, such as a left shield end **116**, and a second shield end opposite the first shield end, such as a right shield end **118**, relative to the orientation shown. The shield body **110** can further define an upper shield end **120** and a lower shield end **122** opposite the upper shield end **120**, relative to the orientation shown. A center **125** of the lockable pipe shield **100** can be defined between the left shield end **116** and the right shield end **118**. Moreover, the shield body **110** can define one or more upper shield edges, such as a first upper shield edge (e.g., a front upper shield edge **126**, relative to the orientation shown) and a second upper shield edge (e.g., a rear upper shield edge **128**, relative to the orientation shown). Each of the front upper shield edge **126** and rear upper shield edge **128** can be defined at the upper shield end **120** and can extend along a length of the lockable pipe shield **100** between the left and right shield ends **116,118**.

[0029] Example aspects of the lockable pipe shield **100** can be formed from a metal material, such as, for example and without limitation, carbon steel, which can be bent to define the semi-cylindrical shape. Additionally, in some aspects the lockable pipe shield **100** can comprise a coating or finish of a pre-galvanized material. Other aspects of the lockable pipe shield **100** can be formed from any other suitable material known in the art, including but not limited to, other metals, plastics, composites, and the like. Furthermore, other aspects of the lockable pipe shield **100** may or may not comprise the finish.

[0030] According to example aspect aspects, the lockable pipe shield **100** can further comprise one or more lock tabs **150** coupled to and movable relative to the shield body **110**. For example, the lock tabs **150** can be bendable relative to the shield body **110** between a first position, as shown, and a second position, shown in FIG. 5. The lock tabs **150** can be configured to selectively lock the lockable pipe shield **100** to a pipe hanger **410** (shown in FIG. 4), as described in further detail

below. In the present aspect, the lockable pipe shield **100** can comprise four of the lock tabs **150**. For example, as shown, the lock tabs **150** can comprise first and second front lock tabs **152,154** formed at or adjacent to the front upper shield edge **126** and first and second rear lock tabs **156,158** formed at or adjacent to the rear upper shield edge **128**. In the present aspect, the front upper shield edge **126** can define an upper boundary of each of the first and second front lock tabs **152, 154**, and the rear upper shield edge **128** can define an upper boundary of each of the first and second rear lock tabs **156,158**, relative to the orientation shown. In other aspects, the front upper shield edge **126** and rear upper shield edge **128** may not define the upper boundaries of the lock tabs **150**. Additionally, in other aspects, the lockable pipe shield **100** may comprise more or fewer lock tabs **150**. For example, other aspects can comprise the first and second front lock tabs **152,154** only or the first and second rear lock tabs **156,158** only. Other aspects can comprise the first front lock tab **152** and the second rear lock tab **158** only, or the second front lock tab **154** and the first rear lock tab **156** only. In example aspects, the lock tabs **150** can be monolithically formed (i.e., formed as a singular component that constitutes a single material without joints or seams) with the shield body **110** of the lockable pipe shield **100**. In other aspects, the lock tabs **150** can be separately formed from the shield body **110** and attached thereto, such as by fasteners or welding. The lock tabs **150** can be formed by stamping, punching, or laser cutting, for example. In other aspects, the lock tabs **150** can be formed by any other suitable manufacturing process.

[0031] According to example aspects, a tab spacing **140** can be defined between the first and second front lock tabs **152,154** and between the first and second rear lock tabs **156,158**. For example, the tab spacings **140** can comprise a front lock tab spacing **142** defined between the first and second front lock tabs **152,154** and a rear lock tab spacing **144** defined between the first and second rear lock tabs **156,158**. Thus, the first front lock tab **152** can be spaced from the second front lock tab **154**, and the first rear lock tab **156** can be spaced from the second rear lock tab **158**. In example aspects, each of the lock tabs **150** can be configured to bend relative to the shield body **110** towards the corresponding tab spacing **140**. Each of the front and rear lock tab spacings **142,144** can define a length $L_{sub.1}$, as shown, and can be configured to be laterally aligned with corresponding front and rear hanger arms **454,456** (shown in FIG. 4) of the pipe hanger **410**, as described in further detail below. According to example aspects, the length $L_{sub.1}$ of the front and rear lock tab spacings **142,144** can be about equal to or slightly greater than a length $L_{sub.2}$ (shown in FIG. 4) of the front and rear hanger arms **454,456**. In other aspects, the length $L_{sub.1}$ can be greater or less than the length $L_{sub.2}$, as desired. In example aspects, each of the tab spacings **140** can be monolithically formed with the shield body **110**.

[0032] Referring to the first and second front lock tabs **152,154**, which can also exemplify the first and second rear lock tabs **156,158**, the first front lock tab **152** can be defined between the left shield end **116** and the center **125** of the lockable pipe shield **100**, and the second front lock tab **154** can be defined between the right shield end **118** and the center **125** of the lockable pipe shield **100**. The first front lock tab **152** and the second front lock tab **154** can be spaced apart by the front lock tab spacing **142**. The front lock tab spacing **142** can be defined substantially at the center **125** of the lockable pipe shield **100**. As shown, each of the first and second front lock tabs **152,154** can define an inner end **160** adjacent to the front lock tab spacing **142** and an outer end **162** opposite the inner end **160**. The first front lock tab **152** can extend from the corresponding inner end **160** to the corresponding outer end **162** in the direction of the left shield end **116**, and the second front lock tab **154** can extend from the corresponding inner end **160** to the corresponding outer end **162** in the direction of the right shield end **118**. According to example aspects, each of the first and second front lock tabs **152,154** can be configured to bend relative to the front lock tab spacing **142** at or near the inner end **160** thereof to wrap around the front hanger arm **454** of the pipe hanger **410** and secure the lockable pipe shield **100** thereto. In example aspects, the first and second rear lock tabs **156,158** can be formed substantially the same as the first and second front lock tabs **152,154** and can be configured to wrap around the rear hanger arm **456** of the pipe hanger **410**.

[0033] FIG. 2 illustrates a close up view of one of the lock tabs **150**, taken from Detail A of FIG. 1. Specifically, the second front lock tab **154** is shown, which can exemplify all of the lock tabs **150**. As shown, the front upper shield edge **126** can define the upper boundary of the second front lock tab **154**. The front upper shield edge **126** can also define an upper boundary of the adjacent front lock tab spacing **142**. According to example aspects, the lock tab **150** can further be defined by a cut **210** formed in the lockable pipe shield **100**. The cut **210** can be formed by stamping, punching, laser cutting, or any other suitable manufacturing method. As shown, the cut **210** can define the outer end **162** of the lock tab **150**, as well as a lower boundary of the lock tab **150**, relative to the orientation shown. Thus, the outer end **162** of the lock tab **150** can be a free outer end **262**, and the inner end **160** of the lock tab **150** can be coupled to the corresponding tab spacing **140** opposite the free outer end **262**. In example aspects, the lock tab **150** can generally define a hinge portion **220** at or adjacent to the inner end **160** and a tab portion **225** at or adjacent to the outer end **162**. The tab portion **225** can be connected to the hinge portion **220** distal to the tab spacing **140**, as shown. [0034] In example aspects, the hinge portion **220** can define a height H.sub.1 that can be less than a height H.sub.2 of the tab portion **225**. The lesser height H.sub.1 of the hinge portion **220** can localize the bending of the lock tab **150** at the hinge portion **220**. The lesser height H.sub.1 of the hinge portion **220** can further allow the lock tab **150** to be easily bent relative to the corresponding tab spacing **140** and the shield body **110** with minimal force, as described in further detail below. Additionally, the greater height H.sub.2 of the tab portion **225** can provide a larger surface area for applying the force to bend the lock tab **150** at the hinge portion **220**. For example, in some aspects, a user can push against the tab portion **225** of the lock tab **150** with a thumb or other finger(s) or with a tool to bend the lock tab **150** at the hinge portion **220**. The tool can be, for example and without limitation, a screwdriver, pliers, hammer, or any other suitable tool known in the art. Additionally, some example aspects of the lock tab **150** can define a tab opening **230** formed through the tab portion **225**, which in the present aspect can be a punch-out **232** formed by punching. The tab opening **230** can define a rectangular slot, as shown, or can define any other suitable shape. In other aspects, the tab opening **230** can be formed by any other suitable manufacturing method known in the art. The tab opening **230** can allow a tool, such as a flat-head screwdriver, to be engaged therewith for pushing or pulling the tab portion **225** in order to bend the lock tab **150** at the hinge portion **220**.

[0035] As shown, some example aspects of the lock tab **150** can define an obtuse angle θ between the hinge portion **220** and the tab portion **225** at the lower boundary of the lock tab **150**. For example, the angle θ can be about 120° in the present aspect. In other aspects, the angle θ can be greater or lesser than 120° . In other aspects, the angle θ may not be obtuse. For example, the angle θ can be about a right angle. Moreover, according to some example aspects, as shown, the various angles and corners defined by the cut **210** and/or the lock tab **150** can be rounded eliminate sharp areas. For example, an upper corner **226** and a lower corner **228** of the tab portion **225** can be rounded so that a user can manually push or pull against the tab portion **225** without poking or nicking their hand.

[0036] FIG. 3 illustrates various example dimensions of one of the lock tabs **150** in inches, according to an example aspect of the present disclosure. The dimensions disclosed herein are merely possible examples and should not be construed as limiting.

[0037] FIG. 4 illustrates a pipe support assembly **400** according to another example aspect of the present disclosure. The pipe support assembly **400** can comprise the pipe hanger **410** and the lockable pipe shield **100**. In example aspects, the pipe hanger **410** can be a clevis hanger **415**, as shown. In other aspects, however, the pipe hanger **410** can be any other suitable pipe hanger **410** known in the art, such as a trapeze hanger or J-hanger. According to example aspects, the pipe hanger **410** can be suspended from a ceiling of a structure to support a pipe **610** (shown in FIG. 6) above a ground surface. The pipe hanger **410** of the present aspect can comprise an upper hanger member **420** and a lower hanger member **440**. In example aspects, a support rod (not shown) or

other support member can engage the upper hanger member **420** and can suspend the pipe hanger **410** from the ceiling. The lower hanger member **440** can be a substantially U-shaped strap **441** and can be configured to cradle the lockable pipe shield **100**, as shown.

[0038] The upper hanger member **420** can be fastened to the lower hanger member **440** by a hanger fastener **430** such as, for example, a bolt **432** and a pair of nuts **434**. In other aspects, the hanger fastener **430** can comprise any other suitable fastener(s) known in the art. As shown, the upper hanger member **420** can define a pair of upper free ends **422** and the lower hanger member **440** can define a pair of lower free ends **442**. Each of the upper free ends **422** can define an upper fastener hole **424** therethrough, and each of the lower free ends **442** can define a lower fastener hole **444** therethrough. Each of the upper fastener holes **424** can be aligned with a corresponding one of the lower fastener holes **444**, and the bolt **432** can extend through each of the upper fastener holes **424** and lower fastener holes **444**. The nuts **434** can be disposed on opposing sides of the bolt **432** and can be tightened against an outer surface **426** of the upper hanger member **420** proximate to the upper free ends **422** thereof. In other aspects, the upper hanger member **420** can be monolithically formed with the lower hanger member **440**.

[0039] According to example aspects, the upper hanger member **420** and lower hanger member **440** can be formed from a metal material, such as, for example and without limitation, carbon steel. In some aspects, the upper hanger member **420** and/or lower hanger member **440** can comprise a coating or finish of a pre-galvanized material, such as, for example. Other aspects of the upper hanger member **420** and/or lower hanger member **440** can be formed from any other suitable material known in the art, including but not limited to, other metals, plastics, composites, and the like. Furthermore, other aspects of the upper hanger member **420** and/or lower hanger member **440** may or may not comprise the finish.

[0040] The lower hanger member **440** can comprise at least one hanger arm. For example, the U-shaped lower hanger member **440** of the present aspect can comprise the front hanger arm **454** and the rear hanger arm **456** opposite the front hanger arm **454**. The front hanger arm **454** and rear hanger arm **456** can each define one of the lower free ends **442**. Example aspects of the lower hanger member **440** can further define an inner hanger surface **446**, an outer hanger surface **448** opposite the inner surface **446**, an upper hanger end **450**, and a lower hanger end **452** opposite the upper hanger end **450**. As shown, the lockable pipe shield **100** can be cradled by the lower hanger member **440**, with the lower shield end **122** of the lockable pipe shield **100** supported on the lower hanger end **452** of the lower hanger member **440** and the outer shield surface **112** confronting the inner hanger surface **446**. According to example aspects, the front lock tab spacing **142** (shown in FIG. 1) of the lockable pipe shield **100** can be laterally aligned with front hanger arm **454** of the lower hanger member **440**, and similarly, the rear lock tab spacing **144** can be laterally aligned with the rear hanger arm **456**. As such, the first and second front lock tabs **152,154** can be oriented on either side of the front hanger arm **454**, and the first and second rear lock tabs **156,158** can be oriented on either side of the rear hanger arm **456**.

[0041] According to example aspects, the lockable pipe shield **100** can be configurable in an unlocked configuration, as shown, wherein the lock tabs **150** are in the first position, and a locked configuration, as shown in FIG. 5, wherein the lock tabs **150** are in the second position. In the unlocked configuration, the lockable pipe shield **100** is not secured to the pipe hanger **410** and can be movable relative to the pipe hanger **410**. For example, the lockable pipe shield **100** can slide laterally relative to the pipe hanger **410** and longitudinally relative to the pipe **610** in the unlocked configuration. In the locked configuration, however, the lockable pipe shield **100** can be secured to the pipe hanger **410** and lateral movement of the lockable pipe shield **100** relative to the pipe hanger **410** can be prevented.

[0042] Referring to FIG. 5, to orient the lockable pipe shield **100** in the locked configuration from the unlocked configuration, the lock tabs **150** of the lockable pipe shield **100** can be folded around the lower hanger member **440**. For example, the first front lock tab **152** can be bent at the

corresponding hinge portion **220** to fold the first front lock tab **152** around a first side edge **556** the front hanger arm **454** of the lower hanger member **440**. The first front lock tab **152** can be manually folded by a user or can be folded using a tool, as described above. Once folded, the tab portion **225** of the first front lock tab **152** can substantially confront the outer hanger surface **448** of the lower hanger member **440**. Similarly, the second front lock tab **154** can be bent at the corresponding hinge portion **220** to fold the second front lock tab **154** around a second side edge **558** of the front hanger arm **454**, which can be oriented substantially opposite the first side edge **556**. The second front lock tab **154** can be manually folded by the user or can be folded using a tool. Once folded, the tab portion **225** of the second front lock tab **154** can substantially confront the tab portion **225** of the first front lock tab **152**. In other aspects, the second front lock tab **154** can be folded prior to folding the first front lock tab **152**. Folding the first and second front lock tabs **152,154** folded around the corresponding first and second side edges **556,558** can secure the lockable pipe shield **100** to the front hanger arm **454** of the pipe hanger **410**, preventing lateral movement of lockable pipe shield **100** relative to the pipe hanger **410**. The first and second rear lock tabs **156,158** (shown in FIG. 1) can be similarly folded around the rear hanger arm **456** of the pipe hanger **410** to secure the lockable pipe shield **100** to the rear hanger arm **456**. According to example aspects, a length of each of the hinge portions **220** of the lock tabs **150** can be configured to allow the lock tabs **150** to fully wrap around the corresponding first and second side edges **556,558** of the front and rear hanger arms **454,456** and, in some aspects, overlap each other.

[0043] As mentioned above, other aspects of the lockable pipe shield **100** can comprise the first and second front lock tabs **152,154** only, or the first and second rear lock tabs **156,158** only, which can be sufficient to prevent lateral movement of the lockable pipe shield **100** relative to the pipe hanger **410** in some environments. Additionally, other aspects of the lockable pipe shield **100** can comprise the first front lock tab **152** and second rear lock tab **158** only, wherein lateral movement of the lockable pipe shield **100** in a first direction can be prevented by the first front lock tab **152**, and lateral movement of the lockable pipe shield **100** in an opposite second direction can be prevented by the second rear lock tab **158**. Similarly, in other aspects, the lockable pipe shield **100** can comprise the second front lock tab **154** and the first rear lock tab **156** only.

[0044] Thus, a method of securing the lockable pipe shield **100** to the pipe hanger **410** can comprise supporting the lower shield end **122** of the lockable pipe shield **100** on the lower hanger end **452** of the pipe hanger **410**. The pipe hanger **410** can comprise the front hanger arm **454** defining the first side edge **556** and the second side edge **558**. The method can further comprise bending the first front lock tab **152** of the lockable pipe shield **100** around the first side edge **556** of the front hanger arm **454**, wherein the lockable pipe shield **100** can define the upper shield end **120** distal to the lower shield end **122** and the first front lock tab **152** can be adjacent to the upper shield end **120**. The method can further comprise bending the second front lock tab **154** of the lockable pipe shield **100** around the second side edge **558** of the front hanger arm **454** towards the first front lock tab **152**, wherein the second front lock tab **154** can also be adjacent to the upper shield end **120**. In example aspects, the method can further comprise the steps of installing the insulation **620** (shown in FIG. 6) with the lockable pipe shield **100** and installing the pipe **610** (shown in FIG. 6) with the lockable pipe shield **100**. In some aspects, the insulation **620** can be pre-assembled with the pipe **610** to define an insulated pipe **630**, and method can comprise installing the insulated pipe **630** with the lockable pipe shield **100**.

[0045] In some aspects, bending the first front lock tab **152** around the first side edge **556** of the front hanger arm **454** can comprise bending the corresponding hinge portion **220** around the first side edge **556** and disposing the corresponding tab portion **225** in confrontation with the outer hanger surface **448** at the front hanger arm **454**. Furthermore, bending the second front lock tab **154** around the second side edge **558** of the front hanger arm **454** can comprise bending the corresponding hinge portion **220** around the second side edge **558** and disposing the corresponding tab portion **225** in confrontation with the tab portion **225** of the first front lock tab **152**. In some

aspects, bending the first front lock tab **152** can further comprise engaging the tab opening **230** of the corresponding tab portion **225** with a tool and pushing or pulling the tab portion **225** of the first front lock tab **152** with the tool. Similarly, bending the second front lock tab **154** can further comprise engaging the tab opening **230** of the corresponding tab portion **225** with the tool and pushing or pulling the tab portion **225** of the second front lock tab **154** with the tool. In some aspects, the pipe hanger **410** can further comprise the rear hanger arm **456**, which can also define the corresponding first side edge **556** and the corresponding second side edge **558**, and the method can further comprise bending the first rear lock tab **156** around the first side edge **556** of the rear hanger arm **456** and bending the second rear lock tab **158** around the second side edge **558** of the rear hanger arm **456**.

[0046] FIG. **6** illustrates a side view of the pipe support assembly **400** supporting the insulated pipe **630**. The insulated pipe **630** can comprise the pipe **610** and the insulation **620**. The pipe support assembly **400** can comprise the pipe hanger **410** and lockable pipe shield **100**. In the present aspect, the lockable pipe shield **100** can be the lockable pipe insulation shield **105** configured to support insulation **620** along with the pipe **610**. The pipe **610** can be part of a larger piping system configured to transport fluid therethrough. The fluid can be, for example, drinking water, waste water, gas, or the like. In the present aspect, the pipe **610** can be substantially encased in a cylindrical piece of the insulation **620**. The insulation **620** can be, for example and without limitation, foam insulation or fiber glass insulation. The insulated pipe **630** can be cradled by the lockable pipe shield **100** and can be supported on the lower shield end **122** of the lockable pipe shield **100** with the insulation **620** confronting the inner shield surface **114**. Furthermore, as shown, the first and second front lock tabs **152,154** of the lockable pipe shield **100** can be folded around the front hanger arm **454** and the first and second rear lock tabs **156,158** can be folded around the rear hanger arm **456** to secure the lockable pipe shield **100** to the pipe hanger **410**. Thus, lateral movement of the lockable pipe shield **100**, as well as the pipe **610** and insulation **620** supported thereon, can be prevented when the pipe support assembly **400** is subjected to vibrations, expansion and contraction cycles, and/or other movement. Furthermore, because the lock tabs **150** are folded away from the insulation **620** and are not located at the load-bearing lower shield end **122** of the lockable pipe shield **100**, the lock tabs **150** will not interfere with and are prevented from damaging the insulation **620** and the pipe **610**. Additionally, the rounded angles and corners of the cuts **210** (shown in FIG. **2**) and the lock tabs **150** can prevent the lockable pipe shield **100** from nicking the insulation **620**.

[0047] One should note that conditional language, such as, among others, “can,” “could,” “might,” or “may,” unless specifically stated otherwise, or otherwise understood within the context as used, is generally intended to convey that certain embodiments include, while other embodiments do not include, certain features, elements and/or steps. Thus, such conditional language is not generally intended to imply that features, elements and/or steps are in any way required for one or more particular embodiments or that one or more particular embodiments necessarily include logic for deciding, with or without user input or prompting, whether these features, elements and/or steps are included or are to be performed in any particular embodiment.

[0048] It should be emphasized that the above-described embodiments are merely possible examples of implementations, merely set forth for a clear understanding of the principles of the present disclosure. Any process descriptions or blocks in flow diagrams should be understood as representing modules, segments, or portions of code which include one or more executable instructions for implementing specific logical functions or steps in the process, and alternate implementations are included in which functions may not be included or executed at all, may be executed out of order from that shown or discussed, including substantially concurrently or in reverse order, depending on the functionality involved, as would be understood by those reasonably skilled in the art of the present disclosure. Many variations and modifications may be made to the above-described embodiment(s) without departing substantially from the spirit and principles of the

present disclosure. Further, the scope of the present disclosure is intended to cover any and all combinations and sub-combinations of all elements, features, and aspects discussed above. All such modifications and variations are intended to be included herein within the scope of the present disclosure, and all possible claims to individual aspects or combinations of elements or steps are intended to be supported by the present disclosure.

Claims

1. A lockable pipe shield comprising: a substantially curved shield body defining a first upper shield edge and a second upper shield edge opposite the first upper shield edge; a first lock tab formed monolithically with the shield body at the first upper shield edge and bent relative to the shield body to extend in a first direction, a first hanger engagement channel defined between the first lock tab and shield body; and a second lock tab formed monolithically with the shield body at the second upper shield edge and bent relative to the shield body to extend in a second direction substantially opposite the first direction, a second hanger engagement channel defined between the second lock tab and the shield body.
2. The lockable pipe shield of claim 1, wherein: the first lock tab is movable from a first position, wherein the first lock tab is substantially flush with shield body, to a second position, wherein the first lock tab is bent relative to the shield body to extend in the first direction; and the second lock tab is movable from a first position, wherein the second lock tab is substantially flush with shield body, to a second position, wherein the second lock tab is bent relative to the shield body to extend in the second direction.
3. The lockable pipe shield of claim 2, wherein: in the first position of the first lock tab, the first lock tab extends substantially in the second direction; and in the first position of the second lock tab, the second lock tab extends substantially in the first direction.
4. The lockable pipe shield of claim 2, wherein the first upper shield edge and the second upper shield edge are substantially coplanar, and wherein the shield body defines a substantially C-shaped curve between the first upper shield edge and the second upper shield edge.
5. The lockable pipe shield of claim 2, wherein each of the first and second lock tabs define an inner end and an outer end opposite the inner end, the inner end coupled to the shield body, the outer end being a free end, each of the first and second lock tabs comprising a hinge portion adjacent to the inner end and a tab portion adjacent to the outer end, the hinge portion configured to bend relative to the shield body.
6. The lockable pipe shield of claim 5, wherein: the first upper shield edge defines an upper boundary of the first lock tab; a first cut formed in the shield body defines the outer end and a lower boundary of the first lock tab; the second upper shield edge defines an upper boundary of the second lock tab; and a second cut formed in the shield body defines the outer end and a lower boundary of the second lock tab.
7. The lockable pipe shield of claim 5, wherein a hinge height of the hinge portion is less than a tab height of the tab portion to facilitate bending at the hinge portion.
8. The lockable pipe shield of claim 7, wherein: the tab portion of the first lock tab defines a first tab opening configured to be engaged by a tool to bend the first lock tab in the first direction; and the tab portion of the second lock tab defines a second tab opening configured to be engaged by the tool to bend the second lock tab in the second direction.
9. The lockable pipe shield of claim 1, further comprising: a third lock tab at the first upper shield edge and bent relative to the shield body to extend substantially in the second direction towards the first lock tab; and a fourth lock tab at the second upper shield edge and bent relative to the shield body to extend substantially in the first direction towards the second lock tab.
10. The lockable pipe shield of claim 9, wherein the first lock tab overlaps the third lock tab and wherein the second lock tab overlaps the fourth lock tab.

- 11.** A pipe support assembly comprising: a substantially U-shaped pipe hanger defining a first side edge and a second side edge opposite the first side edge, the pipe hanger comprising a front hanger arm and a rear hanger arm opposite the front hanger arm; and a lockable pipe shield comprising a shield body, a first lock tab, and a second lock tab, wherein the first lock tab is bent around the front hanger arm at the first side edge and the second lock tab is bent around the rear hanger arm at the second side edge to secure the lockable pipe shield to the pipe hanger; wherein an outer shield surface of the lockable pipe shield confronts an inner hanger surface of the pipe hanger.
- 12.** The pipe support assembly of claim 11, wherein: the first lock tab is movable from a first position, wherein the first lock tab is substantially flush with shield body, to a second position, wherein the first lock tab is bent around the front hanger arm to extend in a first direction; and the second lock tab is movable from a first position, wherein the second lock tab is substantially flush with shield body, to a second position, wherein the second lock tab is bent around the rear hanger arm to extend in a second direction substantially opposite the first direction.
- 13.** The pipe support assembly of claim 12, wherein: the first lock tab is formed at a first upper shield edge of the lockable pipe shield; the second lock tab is formed at a second upper shield edge of the lockable pipe shield opposite the first upper shield edge; the first upper shield edge and the second upper shield edge are substantially coplanar; and the shield body defines a substantially C-shaped curve between the first upper shield edge and the second upper shield edge.
- 14.** The pipe support assembly of claim 13, wherein each of the first and second lock tabs define an inner end and an outer end opposite the inner end, the inner end coupled to the shield body, the outer end being a free end, each of the first and second lock tabs comprising a hinge portion adjacent to the inner end and a tab portion adjacent to the outer end, the hinge portion configured to bend relative to the shield body.
- 15.** The pipe support assembly of claim 14, wherein: the first upper shield edge defines an upper boundary of the first lock tab; a first cut formed in the shield body defines the outer end and a lower boundary of the first lock tab; the second upper shield edge defines an upper boundary of the second lock tab; and a second cut formed in the shield body defines the outer end and a lower boundary of the second lock tab.
- 16.** The pipe support assembly of claim 14, wherein a hinge height of the hinge portion is less than a tab height of the tab portion to facilitate bending at the hinge portion.
- 17.** The pipe support assembly of claim 16, wherein: the tab portion of the first lock tab defines a first tab opening configured to be engaged by a tool to bend the first lock tab in the first direction; and the tab portion of the second lock tab defines a second tab opening configured to be engaged by the tool to bend the second lock tab in the second direction.
- 18.** The pipe support assembly of claim 11, wherein the lockable pipe shield further comprises a third lock tab bent around the front hanger arm at the second side edge and a fourth lock tab bent around the rear hanger arm at the first side edge.
- 19.** The pipe support assembly of claim 18, wherein the first lock tab overlaps the third lock tab and wherein the second lock tab overlaps the fourth lock tab.
- 20.** The pipe support assembly of claim 18, wherein: a first tab spacing is defined between the first lock tab and the third lock tab; a second tab spacing is defined between the second lock tab and the fourth lock tab; the front hanger arm confronts the first tab spacing; and the rear hanger arm confronts the second tab spacing.
-