

surgical procedure, the suction ring 20 is positioned on the eye 24 of a patient, and the interface 16 is engaged between the alignment device 14 and the base member 22. One object of this structural combination is to position and maintain the eye 24 of a patient at a predetermined distance from the laser unit 12 during the surgical procedure.

Fig. 1 further shows that the alignment device 14 includes a wall 26 that surrounds an open passageway 28. Further, the wall 26 is formed with a tapered insert 30, and it has a suction channel 32 that is connected in fluid communication with a suction device 34 via a hose 36. Preferably, the taper of the insert 30 will be in a range between 14° and 22°. As stated above, and indicated in Fig. 1, the end 38 of alignment device 14 can be fixedly mounted on the laser unit 12. This can be accomplished in any manner well known in the pertinent art.

Still referring to Fig. 1 it will be seen that the patient interface 16 is formed with an open passageway 40 and includes a tapered receptacle 42. For the system 10 of the present invention, the taper of receptacle 42 in the patient interface 16 is compatible with the taper of the insert 30 on the alignment device 14. This compatibility allows for a mating engagement of the alignment device 14 with the patient interface 16.

Fig. 1 also shows that a contact lens 44 is mounted at the end 46 of the patient interface 16 and, thus, is presented as an integral part of the patient interface 16. With this in mind, it is to be appreciated that the contact lens 44 and the patient interface 16 can be manufactured as a one-piece unit. The