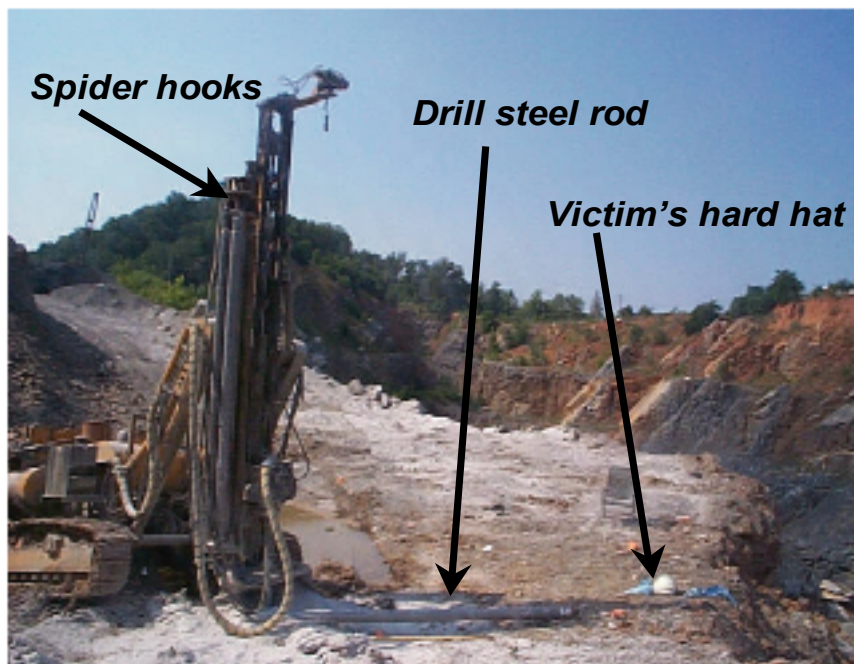


Serious Injury Accident Investigation: Drilling Accident June 25, 2001

A contract driller was seriously injured on June 25, 2001 while working at a surface mineral mine. The victim, who was assisting the drill operator at the time of the accident, was positioned in front of the drill when the last section of steel drill rod fell from the drill rod storage carousel and struck him on the head. The victim was transported to a local hospital, and then airlifted to the UVA Medical Center.



The Gill "Beetle" rock drill at the scene of the accident; victim's hard hat marks location where he fell after being struck by the 10-ft long, 180 lb steel drill rod from the carousel.



Steel rods in the carousel are held in place by a spider hook on top, and a pod (cup) on the bottom; pod bent outward when rod fell out of the carousel.

RECOMMENDATION: To prevent similar accidents from occurring, the drill operator must inspect the drill rig and associated equipment (e.g., the top plate, spider hooks, pods, and other components) prior to use each shift to ensure safe operating condition. During drilling operations, the driller/helper should ensure that steel rods in the carousel rack are properly secured.

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Division of Mineral Mining

Serious Injury Accident Investigation: Drilling Accident June 25, 2001 continued.



After lowering the drill mast, the spider hooks were closely examined; width between hook openings varied up to one-half inch, and two of the hooks were bent downward out of alignment. In addition, some drill cutting debris was found in the lower pod (cup) where the drill steel rod fell out of the carousel.