# DMM Safety Alert:
# Driller Struck By Drill Steel

In August 2009, a driller was struck by a 4-inch X 10-foot section of drill steel that came loose from the storage carousel on the drill. The drill was being trammed/repositioned by a driller trainee when the section of steel fell, striking the driller in the head as he walked beside the drill. This accident was not classified as a serious injury accident since the driller was not hospitalized, however, he did suffer a compression fracture to his back and received out-patient care. There are similarities between this incident and a serious injury accident that took place in Virginia in June 2001. In both cases, a Gill "Beetle" drill was involved and the injuries resulted from stored steel falling from the carousel. Based on information gathered from these accidents and to prevent a similar accident from occurring, the Virginia Division of Mineral Mining recommends the following:

• Regardless of the brand or type of drill utilized, drillers must inspect drilling equipment prior to use and report safety defects to the certified mine foreman **(4VAC25-40-950)**. Also, prior to moving drills, the mast must be lowered to a safe position and tools and other equipment must be secured **(4VAC25-40-1010)**.

• Photographs #1 and #2 at right show the "spider hook" assembly that supports the drill steel at the top of the carousel on the Gill "Beetle" drill. Photograph #1 shows a new part while photograph #2 shows the worn piece from the drill involved in the 2009 accident. Wear and tear on this part was a contributing factor in the 2001 accident as well. Mine operators and drillers should regularly inspect this part to monitor wear and replace it per the recommendations of the manufacturer.

• Photograph #3 shows the bottom of the Gill "Beetle" carousel involved in the 2001 accident. Note the rings or "cups" holding the steel in place. Drill cuttings and other debris may collect in these cups allowing the steel to slip out. Mine operators and drillers should ensure these cups are kept clean.

# 1

# 2

# 3