



*Northland - best seen from above*

## **Helicopter crash – Northland**

**1 December 2011: 1145 NZT**

Grant Harnish, CEO of Salt Air said:

“Our Squirrel AS350 BA helicopter carrying the pilot and a DOC ranger crashed into the sea about one kilometer off the northern end of Karikari Moana beach at approximately 2138 yesterday (30 November).

“Wreckage was found in about seven meters of water.

“The aircraft was helping to fight a fire and we understand at this point that the pilot had been requested by authorities to divert in order to extract people from the beach, away from approaching flames and out of harm’s way.

“He removed the monsoon bucket and set off on this new tasking.

“While the whereabouts of our pilot and his passenger has not been established we must continue to hope desperately that they survived the crash. We are helping his family get to the scene.

“Out of respect for the wishes of the pilot’s family we cannot provide any information about the pilot, other than to say he is one of the Far North’s most experienced and respected helicopter pilots.

“We cannot speculate at this stage about the cause or likely cause of the crash. Details are unclear and we must await the findings of a Civil Aviation Authority investigation before making any comment.

“Suffice to say at this stage that conditions were extremely difficult, it was dark and there was considerable smoke and flame. We only ever operate under those conditions if we believe human life is at risk.”

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