

# In Brief: Iridium helps helicopter tracking

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Iridium Satellite, KDDI Network & Solutions, and Pioneer Navicom have completed air trials of a helicopter tracking system in Japan.

Developed by Pioneer, the automatic helicopter tracking system automatically transmits GPS position coordinates to ground stations and uploads destination point, routes, and text messages to the aircraft through Iridium's satellite network.

The trial and initial deployment was completed by the Japanese Fire and Disaster Management Agency. The Iridium-based system was installed on a new AS365N3 helicopter and rolled out late last year. During the initial, two-hour ferry flight between Osaka and Tokyo, it transmitted flight following data every four seconds through an Iridium circuit-switched data channel.

"In many ways, Iridium is the ideal solution for this application because of its ubiquitous global coverage without blind spots, even when flying at low altitudes among mountainous terrain or over open water," said Hiroaki Tamanaka, director of avionics sales and marketing at Pioneer Navicom in a news release.

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