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Lights, camera ... but where's the action for chopper crew

Kristin Edge, 19th September 2009

A Northland rescue team have gone high-tech and will film life-saving and often dramatic missions.

A small red camera with a black lead to a compact recording box clipped to a belt, not much bigger than a television remote, has been installed on a helmet worn by crew winching people below a hovering helicopter or by those being lowered to a patient in need.

The benefits of being able to record the rescue operations are huge, say those involved.

The waterproof unit, which cost slightly more than \$1000, has been put to the test once since being installed.

While no one was winched, the crew recorded the Navy boat and Whangarei Coastguard vessel involved in the search for a boatie who made a mayday call from near the Hen and Chicken Islands.

Investigations by emergency services have revealed the call may have been a hoax but the footage taken by the helicopter crew was screened on television news.

Chief helicopter pilot Peter Turnbull said the camera would help promote the work done by the team as well as be an educational tool for the staff.

"We can come back and view the operation and make sure we are on top of our game," Mr Turnbull said.

The team have been working on the right position to have the Australia-made camera to catch the action.



St John advanced paramedic Mark Going wears the helmet. Picture/Michael Cunningham

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