

Helicopters attempt to cool Fukushima nuclear plant from the air

Japanese military helicopters have dumped water onto reactors at the crippled Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear complex in a desperate effort to cool them down.

9:51AM GMT 16 Mar 2011

[For the latest updates on the Japan earthquake and tsunami, follow our live coverage.](#)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/8375373/Japan-earthquake-live.html>

Japan suspended ground efforts to cool the reactors last night after a surge in radiation levels at the nuclear plant that was damaged by Friday's earthquake.

This morning, Chinook helicopters carrying red buckets were dispatched from Kasuminome Air Base, near Sendai, to douse the reactors from above before they too were withdrawn due to radiation fears.

A defence ministry official said the military had received orders at 4pm (0700 GMT) to send one CH47 helicopter to the Fukushima plant, but expressed reservations about the plan.

"We know how to put out forest fires, but not a nuclear plant," he said. "It's the first time for us so we don't know what the result will be.

[Reclusive emperor expresses 'deep concern' over nuclear crisis](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/japan-earthquake-and-tsunami-in/8385058/Japans-Emperor-Akihito-expresses-deep-concern-over-Fukushima-nuclear-plant-crisis.html)

(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/japan-earthquake-and-tsunami-in/8385058/Japans-Emperor-Akihito-expresses-deep-concern-over-Fukushima-nuclear-plant-crisis.html>)

[Engineer 'retired 35 years ago' over Fukushima safety](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/8384966/Japan-nuclear-plant-disaster-engineer-retired-35-years-ago-over-Fukushima-safety-concerns.html)

(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/8384966/Japan-nuclear-plant-disaster-engineer-retired-35-years-ago-over-Fukushima-safety-concerns.html>)

[Radiation health risks: Q&A](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/science-news/8384483/Japan-nuclear-plant-disaster-everything-you-need-to-know-about-radiation-health-risks.html) (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/science-news/8384483/Japan-nuclear-plant-disaster-everything-you-need-to-know-about-radiation-health-risks.html>)

[Japan crisis: people 'pushed to the](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/8385539/Japan-nuclear-crisis-people-pushed-to-the-limit.html)

[limit'](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/8385539/Japan-nuclear-crisis-people-pushed-to-the-limit.html) (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/8385539/Japan-nuclear-crisis-people-pushed-to-the-limit.html>)

"There are unknowns - what the radioactive risks are and whether dumping the water will be successful. But since this is an emergency, the government has decided to do it this way."

[How the disaster unfolded: Japan's worst natural disaster in video](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/japan-earthquake-and-tsunami-in/)

(<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/japan/japan-earthquake-and-tsunami-in/>)

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