**'Most people don't survive' - KZN hikers survive lightning strike [South Africa]**

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A quick response by a KwaZulu-Natal rescue service has saved the lives of two Durban men that were struck by lightning on Friday. John and Roger Esteves from the Bluff had set out with a party of five from Sani Backpackers on the serene Drakensberg mountain range. The group was meant to head to Gxalingenwa cave when they encountered a heavy thunderstorm. The duo was hit by lightning and thrown to the ground.

"Roger was able to get up after sustaining a strike to his body, which entered through his shoulder and exited out his buttocks. John was able to call for help," Brett Deavin from Berg Protection Services said. Deavin said they received an emergency call for help just after 17:00 and rushed to the scene. "Immediately our tactical rescue vehicle was dispatched to Sani Backpackers. [They] set off with an advanced party with medical equipment at just after 18:00." Deavin said that help arrived at the hiking party at 19:30. "It is a good thing we left when we did. It takes time to get to them. They could have been stuck there overnight which would have delayed medical treatment." Roger was found lying on the path unable to move due to his injuries.

"At this time another thunderstorm with lightning and rain unleashed and was threatening the rescue crew." He said Roger was put onto a rescue stretcher and transported down to emergency vehicles standing by. "Midland's EMRS [ambulance] received the patients and were treated by Advanced Life Support. Rescue efforts ended at 22:00 when patients were transported to hospital." Deavin said it was a miracle that the men had escaped after being struck. "We have seen these before and most people do not survive."