

PARENTS HEARTBROKEN AFTER 5-DAY-OLD BABY KILLED BY LIGHTNING

<https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Parents-heartbroken-after-5-day-old-baby-killed-by-lightning-20150209>

Published On February 09, 2015 07:55

Siso Naile and Amanda Khoza The witness

Pietermaritzburg - Hlengiwe Sangweni's family is reeling in shock after her 5-day-old baby died in her arms after being struck by lightning on Friday.

The newborn - who hadn't even been photographed yet – was among six deaths by lightning reported following Friday's stormy weather.

Sitting on a grass mat near a burning candle, Sangweni, 31, from Kwazayeka in Sweetwaters, said she gave birth to a healthy baby boy last Monday and named him Ayabongwa.

But the joy of welcoming her first son was short-lived.

Storm

Recounting what happened, Sangweni said she was sitting on the bed at around 17:30 on Friday, rocking her baby to sleep, when the storm began.

"I was holding him and then all of a sudden, lightning came into the house... and hit me and I felt my body shaking.

"When I looked at my baby, I saw blood coming out of his nose and I knew that he was gone," said a visibly distraught Sangweni.

"I was discharged from hospital on Thursday. The baby had been home for only one night. I still can't believe what happened, I can't even eat, my breasts are sore and full of milk, but the baby is gone," she said.

Ayabonga's father, Thamsanqa Mnguni, 30, said he will never forget the moment he lost his son, of whom he does not have a picture to remember him by.

"We are heartbroken because we were really looking forward to having a baby boy," he said.

Other lightning deaths

At Taylor's Halt near Elandskop, Nokukhanya Nkomo, 52, described how her father, Funindawo Dlamini, was killed by a ball of lightning.

She said lightning came in through the door and struck her mother first.

"We were all sitting in the hut which we normally sit in when it storms when the lightning came in. We saw a red electric ball that struck my mother and then went to my father," she said.

Her brother, Simphiwe, said they called the police who arrived and took a statement along with his father's body.

"We were also struck [by the lightning]. We were in a lot of pain and asked a family member to take us to the local clinic where we were given painkillers and instructed to drink milk and advised to detox."

Msunduzi Mayor Chris Ndlela visited the two families.

He said: "The situation was shocking and saddening for both families, especially the one of a 5- day-old who was just being welcomed to his new home."

Ndlela advised people to install lightning conductors so that they can divert lightning from striking their properties.

No details of the other four deaths were available