

Two men are killed in lightning strike

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RESIDENTS of Loskop's Makekeni village outside Estcourt are reeling in shock after two men were killed by lightning during torrential rains that wreaked havoc in various parts of the country at the weekend.

Mduduzi Mazibuko, 31, died on the scene, while Cwepheshe Nene, 27, was certified dead on arrival at a local clinic after 16 people were struck by lightning yesterday.

Eight of the 14 injured are in a critical condition. A group of men had been at Mazibuko's homestead for a traditional ceremony when a vicious thunderstorm started.

The men, who had been outside, tried to run for cover but were struck by lightning before they could get indoors.

Mazibuko's father, Linda, said his son died instantly, while others tried to resuscitate Nene.

He said the family was heartbroken since they had held the traditional ceremony for five family members who were shot dead in 2009.

"We are enduring more pain now. The situation is very strenuous for my family."

A disaster management team led by cooperative governance and traditional affairs MEC Nomusa Dube yesterday visited the grieving families and handed over lightning conductors to the community.

Dube warned communities to be on full alert as the rain season starts.

"We have decided to speed up our programme of distributing lightning conductors across the province, mainly in rural areas that are most prone to fatal lightning strikes.

"We would also like to warn communities that the rainy season is expected to result in flooding and heavy winds.

"As the department we are deploying our teams to all municipalities so that they are based there and will be able to provide rapid response in case of such disasters," she said.

South African Weather Bureau forecaster Venetia Magane said while the rainfall had eased in Gauteng, continuous showers and thunderstorms will continue in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Limpopo today.