

## Family of 4 killed by lightning [South Africa]

August 29 2012 at 09:31am  
By Yusuf Moolla

[Comment on this story](#)

Pietermaritzburg - A family of four were killed instantly when they were struck by lightning in Sweetwaters in Pietermaritzburg on Tuesday.

A mother and father were carrying their six-month-old daughter and three-year-old son through an open field when they were struck.

Netcare 911 spokesman Chris Botha said the four had sustained severe burns and died before paramedics and police could get to the scene.

He said the paramedics had been called just after 5pm and arrived at the field within minutes.

Botha said an extremely high current had passed through the bodies, burning them.

A lightning victim suffered similar, but often worse, injuries to someone who was burnt by fire, he said.

The field that the family were crossing was near a school. It seems the family were heading there to seek cover from the coming rain.

"From the position of the bodies it appears the children were in their parents' arms," he said.

The police search and rescue unit remained at the scene into the night, trying to piece together the family's last moments before they informed their next of kin.

SA weather forecaster Lucky Makhwedzha said that the storm had not been classified "severe" as there were no strong winds, swirling clouds or heavy rain.

"However, any general storm contains lightning which is dangerous," he said.

By 7pm on Tuesday night, the storm had moved through Richmond and passed Amanzimtoti on its way out to sea. - The Mercury