# **Two sportsmen dead in Gauteng: highlighting the dangers of lightning [South Africa]**

<https://kemptonexpress.co.za/191820/two-dead-in-gauteng-the-dangers-of-lightning-highlighted/>

Ekurhuleni emergency services spell out the dos and don’ts during a storm

February 17, 2019

Two people, both from the sporting fraternity, were killed by lightning in Gauteng within a week, again highlighting the deadly force of this weather phenomenon.

On January 26 a rowing coach from Somerset College in the Western Cape, Nicholas Whails (19), was killed by lightning at Germiston Lake during a regatta.

At the time of his death, Whails was hiding under a tree during a storm with a young rower, William McDonald (14), also from Somerset College. McDonald was seriously injured.

Five days later, on January 31, Clinton Flynn, a cricket coach at Crawford Preparatory in Sandton was struck by lightning. He later died in hospital.

In light of these tragedies, the City of Ekurhuleni urges residents to be cautious as lightning and thunderstorms regularly hit Gauteng.

Lightning is a sudden electrostatic discharge that occurs typically during a thunderstorm. This discharge occurs between electrically charged regions of a cloud, between two clouds, or between a cloud and the ground.

William Ntladi, spokesperson for Ekurhuleni Emergency Services, gave the following tips:

What to do

Lightning often strikes the tallest object in the area during thunderstorms, so stay away from open fields or hilltops.

Check weather forecasts daily and avoid going to a swimming pool, river, lake or beach on rainy days and all other water sport activities.

If you find yourself in open water during a thunderstorm, return to land immediately.

Look for a low-lying area like a valley or gulley, preferably obscured from the rain. Take refuge in there until the storm passes.

Crouch down with your heels touching and your head between your knees: this will make you a smaller target.

If you are in a boat and cannot return to safety, drop anchor and crouch as low as possible.

Turn off and stay away from wired electronics.