

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

68-0157 (9-06) - 3091078 - EI

JOEL T BELL
Claimant

APPEAL NO: 17A-UI-09381-JE-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

TEAM STAFFING SOLUTIONS INC
Employer

OC: 02/19/17
Claimant: Respondent (2)

Iowa Code section 96.5(1)j – Voluntary Leaving (Temporary Assignment)
Iowa Code section 96.3-7 – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from the September 5, 2017, reference 02, decision that allowed benefits to the claimant. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call before Administrative Law Judge Julie Elder on October 9, 2017. The claimant did not respond to the hearing notice and did not participate in the hearing or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice. Sarah Fiedler, Human Resources Generalist, participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer. Employer's Exhibits One and Two were admitted into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the employer discharged the claimant for work-connected misconduct and whether the claimant sought reassignment from the employer.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as a full-time production laborer for Team Staffing Solutions last assigned to NCI from June 27, 2017 to August 11, 2017. The client ended the assignment because the claimant was witnessed hitting and kicking a soda machine and cracking it (Employer's Exhibit Two). After the assignment ended, the claimant failed to report to the employer within three working days as required by written policy (Employer's Exhibit One). The claimant has claimed and received unemployment insurance benefits in the amount of \$2,880.00 for the six weeks ending September 30, 2017.

The employer was available and waiting for the fact-finder's call August 31, 2017, at 2:00 p.m. but did not receive a call. The employer called the number listed on the notice of fact-finding and left a voice mail but did not receive a return call.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant voluntarily left his employment without good cause attributable to the employer.

Iowa Code section 96.5(1)j provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits, regardless of the source of the individual's wage credits:

1. Voluntary quitting. If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual's employer, if so found by the department. But the individual shall not be disqualified if the department finds that:

j. (1) The individual is a temporary employee of a temporary employment firm who notifies the temporary employment firm of completion of an employment assignment and who seeks reassignment. Failure of the individual to notify the temporary employment firm of completion of an employment assignment within three working days of the completion of each employment assignment under a contract of hire shall be deemed a voluntary quit unless the individual was not advised in writing of the duty to notify the temporary employment firm upon completion of an employment assignment or the individual had good cause for not contacting the temporary employment firm within three working days and notified the firm at the first reasonable opportunity thereafter.

(2) To show that the employee was advised in writing of the notification requirement of this paragraph, the temporary employment firm shall advise the temporary employee by requiring the temporary employee, at the time of employment with the temporary employment firm, to read and sign a document that provides a clear and concise explanation of the notification requirement and the consequences of a failure to notify. The document shall be separate from any contract of employment and a copy of the signed document shall be provided to the temporary employee.

(3) For the purposes of this paragraph:

(a) "Temporary employee" means an individual who is employed by a temporary employment firm to provide services to clients to supplement their workforce during absences, seasonal workloads, temporary skill or labor market shortages, and for special assignments and projects.

(b) "Temporary employment firm" means a person engaged in the business of employing temporary employees.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.26(19) provides:

Voluntary quit with good cause attributable to the employer and separations not considered to be voluntary quits. The following are reasons for a claimant leaving employment with good cause attributable to the employer:

(19) The claimant was employed on a temporary basis for assignment to spot jobs or casual labor work and fulfilled the contract of hire when each of the jobs was completed. An election not to report for a new assignment to work shall not be construed as a voluntary leaving of employment. The issue of a refusal of an offer of suitable work shall be adjudicated when an offer of work is made by the former employer. The provisions of Iowa Code section 96.5(3) and rule 24.24(96) are controlling in the determination of suitability of work. However, this subrule shall not apply to substitute school employees who are subject to the provisions of Iowa Code section 96.4(5) which denies benefits that are based on service in an educational institution when the individual declines or

refuses to accept a new contract or reasonable assurance of continued employment status. Under this circumstance, the substitute school employee shall be considered to have voluntarily quit employment.

The client ended the claimant's assignment because he hit and kicked a soda machine causing damage to the machine. The remaining question is whether the claimant sought reassignment from the employer. The purpose of the statute and the employer's policy is to provide notice to the temporary agency employer that the claimant is available for work at the conclusion of each temporary assignment so he may be reassigned and continue working. In this case, the claimant gave the employer no notice of his availability and, therefore, is considered to have quit the employment. Benefits are denied.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.10 provides:

Employer and employer representative participation in fact-finding interviews.

(1) "Participate," as the term is used for employers in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means submitting detailed factual information of the quantity and quality that if unrebutted would be sufficient to result in a decision favorable to the employer. The most effective means to participate is to provide live testimony at the interview from a witness with firsthand knowledge of the events leading to the separation. If no live testimony is provided, the employer must provide the name and telephone number of an employee with firsthand information who may be contacted, if necessary, for rebuttal. A party may also participate by providing detailed written statements or documents that provide detailed factual information of the events leading to separation. At a minimum, the information provided by the employer or the employer's representative must identify the dates and particular circumstances of the incident or incidents, including, in the case of discharge, the act or omissions of the claimant or, in the event of a voluntary separation, the stated reason for the quit. The specific rule or policy must be submitted if the claimant was discharged for violating such rule or policy. In the case of discharge for attendance violations, the information must include the circumstances of all incidents the employer or the employer's representative contends meet the definition of unexcused absences as set forth in 871—subrule 24.32(7). On the other hand, written or oral statements or general conclusions without supporting detailed factual information and information submitted after the fact-finding decision has been issued are not considered participation within the meaning of the statute.

(2) "A continuous pattern of nonparticipation in the initial determination to award benefits," pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, as the term is used for an entity representing employers, means on 25 or more occasions in a calendar quarter beginning with the first calendar quarter of 2009, the entity files appeals after failing to participate. Appeals filed but withdrawn before the day of the contested case hearing will not be considered in determining if a continuous pattern of nonparticipation exists. The division administrator shall notify the employer's representative in writing after each such appeal.

(3) If the division administrator finds that an entity representing employers as defined in Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, has engaged in a continuous pattern of nonparticipation, the division administrator shall suspend said representative for a period of up to six months on the first occasion, up to one year on the second occasion and up to ten years on the third or subsequent occasion. Suspension by the division

administrator constitutes final agency action and may be appealed pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.19.

(4) "Fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual," as the term is used for claimants in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means providing knowingly false statements or knowingly false denials of material facts for the purpose of obtaining unemployment insurance benefits. Statements or denials may be either oral or written by the claimant. Inadvertent misstatements or mistakes made in good faith are not considered fraud or willful misrepresentation.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 96.3(7)"b" as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2160.

The unemployment insurance law requires benefits be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later denied benefits even if the claimant acted in good faith and was not at fault. However, a claimant will not have to repay an overpayment when an initial decision to award benefits on an employment separation issue is reversed on appeal if two conditions are met: (1) the claimant did not receive the benefits due to fraud or willful misrepresentation, and (2) the employer failed to participate in the initial proceeding that awarded benefits. In addition, if a claimant is not required to repay an overpayment because the employer failed to participate in the initial proceeding, the employer's account will be charged for the overpaid benefits. Iowa Code section 96.3(7)a, b.

The claimant received benefits but has been denied benefits as a result of this decision. The claimant, therefore, was overpaid benefits.

Because the employer participated in the fact-finding interview, the claimant is required to repay the overpayment and the employer will not be charged for benefits paid.

The employer made every effort to participate in the fact-finding interview personally through the statements of Human Resources Generalist Sarah Fiedler. She was available and waiting for the fact-finder's phone call and when she did not receive it she tried to call the fact-finder but did not receive a return call. Because the employer attempted to participate but was prevented from doing so through no fault of its own, the administrative law judge finds the claimant's overpayment of benefits cannot be waived and he is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$2,880.00 for the six weeks ending September 30, 2017.

DECISION:

The September 5, 2017, reference 02, decision is reversed. The claimant voluntarily left his employment without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are withheld until such time as he has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times his weekly benefit amount, provided he is otherwise eligible. The claimant has received benefits but was not eligible for those benefits. The employer attempted to personally participate in the fact-finding interview within the meaning of the law. Therefore, the claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$2,880.00 for the six weeks ending September 30, 2017.

Julie Elder
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

je/scn