

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

LINDSEY M AFRICA
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 11A-UI-04529-M2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

RMG DIRECT INC
Employer

OC: 01/16/11
Claimant: Respondent (5)

Section 96.5-1 – Voluntary Quit
Section 96.5-3-a – Refusal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Employer filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated March 31, 2011, reference 05, which held claimant eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a hearing was scheduled for and held on May 3, 2011. Claimant participated. Employer did not participate, having failed to be available at any of the three phone numbers provided.

ISSUE:

The issue in this matter is whether claimant quit for good cause attributable to employer.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: The employer announced that its Manchester, Iowa location was closing. That location closed on February 25, 2011 and the location is for rent. The claimant on or about January 26, 2011 was offered the ability to go to the Independence location at the same rate of pay, but no guarantee of hours. Independence is approximately 40-50 miles round trip more from the claimant's residence than Manchester, Iowa. The relocation would have caused great substantial hardship.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.5-1 provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

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.

Iowa Code section 96.5-3-a provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

3. Failure to accept work. If the department finds that an individual has failed, without good cause, either to apply for available, suitable work when directed by the department or to accept suitable work when offered that individual. The department shall, if possible, furnish the individual with the names of employers which are seeking employees. The individual shall apply to and obtain the signatures of the employers designated by the department on forms provided by the department. However, the employers may refuse to sign the forms. The individual's failure to obtain the signatures of designated employers, which have not refused to sign the forms, shall disqualify the individual for benefits until requalified. To requalify for benefits after disqualification under this subsection, the individual shall work in and be paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

a. In determining whether or not any work is suitable for an individual, the department shall consider the degree of risk involved to the individual's health, safety, and morals, the individual's physical fitness, prior training, length of unemployment, and prospects for securing local work in the individual's customary occupation, the distance of the available work from the individual's residence, and any other factor which the department finds bears a reasonable relation to the purposes of this paragraph. Work is suitable if the work meets all the other criteria of this paragraph and if the gross weekly wages for the work equal or exceed the following percentages of the individual's average weekly wage for insured work paid to the individual during that quarter of the individual's base period in which the individual's wages were highest:

(1) One hundred percent, if the work is offered during the first five weeks of unemployment.

(2) Seventy-five percent, if the work is offered during the sixth through the twelfth week of unemployment.

(3) Seventy percent, if the work is offered during the thirteenth through the eighteenth week of unemployment.

(4) Sixty-five percent, if the work is offered after the eighteenth week of unemployment.

However, the provisions of this paragraph shall not require an individual to accept employment below the federal minimum wage.

871 IAC 24.24(1)a provides:

(1) Bona fide offer of work.

a. In deciding whether or not a claimant failed to accept suitable work, or failed to apply for suitable work, it must first be established that a bona fide offer of work was made to the individual by personal contact or that a referral was offered to the claimant by personal contact to an actual job opening and a definite refusal was made by the individual. For purposes of a recall to work, a registered letter shall be deemed to be sufficient as a personal contact.

871 IAC 24.24(8) provides:

(8) Refusal disqualification jurisdiction. Both the offer of work or the order to apply for work and the claimant's accompanying refusal must occur within the individual's benefit year, as defined in subrule 24.1(21), before the Iowa code subsection 96.5(3) disqualification can be imposed. It is not necessary that the offer, the order, or the refusal occur in a week in which the claimant filed a weekly claim for benefits before the disqualification can be imposed.

Claimant was laid off due to a permanent business closing. There was not a refusal of suitable work, as the distance to the new location was not suitable and would have created a substantial hardship to the claimant. Thus it was not disqualifying.

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated March 31, 2011, reference 05, is affirmed as modified. Unemployment insurance benefits are allowed, provided claimant is otherwise eligible.

Stan McElderry
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

srm/css