

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**ANDREW JOHNSON**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 07A-UI-07468-BT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**SWIFT & COMPANY**  
Employer

**OC: 07/01/07 R: 12  
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Section 96.5-1-d – Voluntary Leaving/Illness or Injury  
871 IAC 24.25(35) – Separation Due to Illness or Injury

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Andrew Johnson (claimant) appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated July 26, 2007, reference 01, which held that he was not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits because he voluntarily quit his employment (employer) without good cause attributable to the employer. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on August 20, 2007. The claimant participated in the hearing. The employer elected not to participate. Based on the evidence, the arguments of the party, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law, and decision.

**ISSUE:**

The issue is whether the claimant's voluntary separation from employment qualifies him to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was employed as a full-time production worker from October 16, 2006 through March 14, 2007 when he went on medical leave due to a non-related-work injury or illness. The claimant was unable to work pursuant to medical advice from a treating physician. He has not yet received a full medical release from the treating physician. The claimant subsequently quit his employment based on the fact that his employer advised him it would not protest unemployment insurance benefits.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

The issue to be determined is whether the reasons for the claimant's separation from employment qualify him to receive unemployment insurance benefits. He is not qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits if he voluntarily quit without good cause attributable to the employer. Iowa Code sections 96.5-1. The claimant left his employment on May 14, 2007 due to a non-work-related medical condition.

Iowa Code section 96.5-1-d 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. But the individual shall not be disqualified if the department finds that:

d. The individual left employment because of illness, injury or pregnancy upon the advice of a licensed and practicing physician, and upon knowledge of the necessity for absence immediately notified the employer, or the employer consented to the absence, and after recovering from the illness, injury or pregnancy, when recovery was certified by a licensed and practicing physician, the individual returned to the employer and offered to perform services and the individual's regular work or comparable suitable work was not available, if so found by the department, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

871 IAC 24.25(35) provides:

Voluntary quit without good cause. In general, a voluntary quit means discontinuing the employment because the employee no longer desires to remain in the relationship of an employee with the employer from whom the employee has separated. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.5. However, the claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving Iowa Code section 96.5, subsection (1), paragraphs "a" through "i," and subsection 10. The following reasons for a voluntary quit shall be presumed to be without good cause attributable to the employer:

(35) The claimant left because of illness or injury which was not caused or aggravated by the employment or pregnancy and failed to:

(a) Obtain the advice of a licensed and practicing physician;

(b) Obtain certification of release for work from a licensed and practicing physician;

(c) Return to the employer and offer services upon recovery and certification for work by a licensed and practicing physician; or

(d) Fully recover so that the claimant could perform all of the duties of the job.

The claimant went on a medical leave of absence due to a non-work related illness. He would only be eligible for benefits if his position were not available to him after his recovery. A "recovery" under Iowa Code section 96.5-1-d means a complete recovery without restriction. White v. Employment Appeal Board, 487 N.W.2d 342, 345 (Iowa 1992) (citing Hedges v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 368 N.W.2d 862, 867 (Iowa App. 1985)). The claimant has not been released to return to full work duties and has therefore not fully recovered. Accordingly, the claimant's separation is considered to be a voluntary quit without good cause attributable to the employer and benefits must be denied.

**DECISION:**

The unemployment insurance decision dated July 26, 2007, reference 01, is affirmed. The claimant voluntarily left work without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are withheld until he has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times his weekly benefit amount, provided he is otherwise eligible.

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Susan D. Ackerman  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

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