

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

JAMIE A KORTHALS
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 13A-UI-11229-MT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

WIECHMAN PIG COMPANY INC
Employer

OC: 09/01/13
Claimant: Respondent (2R)

Section 96.5-1 – Voluntary Quit
Section 96.3-7 – Recovery of Overpayment of Benefits, Employer Chargeability for
non participation at Fact Finding

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Employer filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated September 25, 2013, reference 01, which held claimant eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a hearing was scheduled for and held on October 30, 2013. Employer participated by Clark Johnson, Manager and Kevin Sievers, Assistant Manager. Claimant failed to respond to the hearing notice and did not participate. Exhibit One was admitted into evidence.

ISSUES:

The issues in this matter are whether the claimant quit for good cause attributable to the employer, whether claimant is overpaid unemployment insurance benefits and whether employer's account is charged due to non participation at fact finding.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant last worked for employer on August 30, 2013. Claimant walked off the job after a disagreement with a coworker. Claimant did not tell the employer he was leaving or why. Continued work was available. Claimant did not contact employer for three days after to ask if he still had a job.

Employer did personally participate at the fact finding interview with a knowledgeable witness.

There is no evidence that proves claimant received benefits due to fraud or willful misrepresentation.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The administrative law judge holds that the evidence has failed to establish that claimant voluntarily quit for good cause attributable to the employer when claimant terminated the employment relationship because of a conflict with employer. The three-day delay in contacting employer after claimant walked off the job indicates that this is a quit for personal reasons caused by a conflict with a coworker. Benefits withheld.

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.

871 IAC 24.25(21) 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:

(21) The claimant left because of dissatisfaction with the work environment.

871 IAC 24.25(22) 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:

(22) The claimant left because of a personality conflict with the supervisor.

The next issue concerns an overpayment of unemployment insurance benefits and charges to employer's account.

Fraud or willful misrepresentation by the claimant means providing knowingly false statements or knowingly false denials of material facts for the purpose of obtaining unemployment benefits. See 871 IAC 24.10(4).

Employer participation would include testimony from a firsthand witness or the name and number of a firsthand witness who may be contacted for rebuttal. It could also include a detailed written statement or documents that provide specific, factual information regarding the separation. At a minimum, the employer's information regarding a discharge must include the dates, particular circumstances and the act or omissions of the claimant. A voluntary separation should include the stated reason for the quit. See 871 IAC 24.10(1)

Statements or general conclusions without supporting detailed factual information and/or information submitted after the fact-finding interview are not considered participation within the meaning of the statute. See 871 IAC 24.10(1)

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 § 96.3-7-a, -b.

This matter is remanded to the claims section for determination of claimant's overpayment.

Employer's account shall not be charged because employer did meaningfully participate at fact finding.

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated September 25, 2013, reference 01, is reversed and remanded for determination of claimant's overpayment. Unemployment insurance benefits shall be withheld until claimant has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times claimant's weekly benefit amount, provided claimant is otherwise eligible. Employer's account shall not be charged.

Marlon Mormann
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

mdm/pjs