

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

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**MELINDA J THOMAS**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO: 18A-UI-07301-JC-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE  
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**OC: 02/25/18  
Claimant: Appellant (6)**

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Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) – Dismissal of Appeal on Default  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.2(1)g – Retroactive Benefits

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

An appeal was filed from an unemployment insurance decision dated July 3, 2018, (reference 04) that denied retroactive benefits. Notice of the hearing was mailed to the claimant's last known address of record for a telephone hearing to be held at 3:00 p.m. on July 24, 2018. A review of the Appeals Bureau's conference call system after 3:15 p.m. shows that the claimant registered a phone number to participate in the hearing, but failed to be available when called. A voicemail was provided, directing her to call the Appeals Bureau immediately to participate, and a grace period extended, to allow her to respond. No hearing was conducted.

**ISSUE:**

Should the appeal be dismissed based upon the appellant not being available to participate in the scheduled hearing?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The claimant/appellant was properly notified of the scheduled hearing on this appeal. The claimant/appellant, Melinda J. Thomas, failed to be available when called for the hearing, nor did she request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice.

The hearing notice instruction specifically advised the claimant:

Date: TUE JUL 24, 2018  
Iowa Time: 3:00 p.m.

**You must register for the hearing immediately!**

**You must register your phone number and the name(s) and phone number(s) of any witness(es) with the Appeals Bureau. If you do not register, the judge will not be able to call you or your witness(es) for the hearing.**

The back page of the hearing notice provided further instruction and warning:

**Failure to Participate**

If you do not participate in the hearing, the judge may dismiss the appeal or issue a decision without considering your evidence or witness(es).

The agency's decision concluded that the claimant was ineligible for retroactive benefits.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

The Iowa Administrative Procedure Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides that if a party fails to appear or participate in a hearing after proper service of notice, the judge may enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party. The statute further states that if a party makes a timely request to vacate the decision and shows good cause for failing to appear, the judge shall vacate the decision and conduct another hearing.

Agency rule Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) provides that if the appealing party has not responded to a notice of telephone hearing by providing the Appeals Bureau with the names and telephone numbers of the persons who are participating in the hearing *by the scheduled starting time of the hearing or is not available at the telephone number provided*, the judge may decide the appealing party is in default and dismiss the appeal as provided in Iowa Code § 17A.12(3). The record may be reopened if the absent party makes a request to reopen the hearing and shows good cause for reopening the hearing. The rule further states that *failure to read or follow the instructions on the notice of hearing is not good cause for reopening the record*. Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7)c. (Emphasis added.)

The appellant, Melinda J. Thomas, appealed the unemployment insurance decision but failed to be available to participate in the scheduled hearing. The appellant has therefore defaulted on her appeal pursuant to Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) and Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.14(7), and the decision remains in force and effect.

If the appellant disagrees with this decision, a written request to reopen the record must be made to the administrative law judge within 15 days after the mailing date of this decision. The request should be mailed to the administrative law judge at the address listed at the end of this decision and must explain the emergency or other good cause that prevented the appellant from participating in the hearing at the scheduled time.

**DECISION:**

The appellant is in default and the appeal is dismissed. The unemployment insurance decision dated July 3, 2018, (reference 04) denying retroactive benefits remains in effect.

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Jennifer L. Beckman  
Administrative Law Judge  
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau  
Iowa Workforce Development  
1000 East Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209  
Fax 515-478-3528

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Decision Dated and Mailed

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