

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Section  
1000 East Grand—Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
DECISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
68-0157 (7-97) – 3091078 - EI

JADE A COLLINGSWORTH  
719 N 9<sup>TH</sup> ST  
FORT DODGE IA 50501-2646

ELECTROLUX HOME PRODUCTS INC  
FRIGIDAIRE  
C/O TALX EMPLOYER SERVICES  
PO BOX 1160  
COLUMBUS OH 43216-1160

Appeal Number: 06A-UI-06054-S2T  
OC: 04/30/06 R: 01  
Claimant: Respondent (2)

**This Decision Shall Become Final**, unless within fifteen (15) days from the date below, you or any interested party appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by submitting either a signed letter or a signed written Notice of Appeal, directly to the **Employment Appeal Board, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor—Lucas Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319**.

The appeal period will be extended to the next business day if the last day to appeal falls on a weekend or a legal holiday.

STATE CLEARLY

1. The name, address and social security number of the claimant.
2. A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken.
3. That an appeal from such decision is being made and such appeal is signed.
4. The grounds upon which such appeal is based.

YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in this appeal or you may obtain a lawyer or other interested party to do so provided there is no expense to Workforce Development. If you wish to be represented by a lawyer, you may obtain the services of either a private attorney or one whose services are paid for with public funds. It is important that you file your claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

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(Administrative Law Judge)

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(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct  
Section 96.3-7 – Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Electrolux Home Products (employer) appealed a representative's May 30, 2006 decision (reference 01) that concluded Jade Collingsworth (claimant) was discharged and there was no evidence of willful or deliberate misconduct. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on June 29, 2006. The claimant participated personally and through Robbie Hadaway, Production Worker. The employer participated by Mallory Russell, Human Resources Generalist.

#### 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 hired on September 26, 2002, as a full-time specialist 1. The employer's attendance policy is posted and the claimant understood the policy. Anyone who receives over ten points for absences and has received a final warning will be terminated. The attendance period runs from July 1 to June 30.

The claimant started the July 1, 2005, period with a 1.5 point carry over. The claimant received 4.5 points for absence due to the illness of her four-year-old child. The claimant understood she could file for Family Medical Leave to cover the absences but she did not. The claimant understood how to file for Family Medical Leave because she had done so for personal medical issues. The claimant received 2 points for oversleeping and 2 points for an absence due to her own illness. The employer issued her warnings for attendance on October 25, November 7 and December 7, 2005. The employer warned the claimant that further infractions could result in her termination from employment.

On April 28, 2006, the claimant was ten minutes tardy to work because her child was ill. The employer terminated the claimant on May 1, 2006, due to excessive absences after repeated warning.

#### REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct. For the following reasons, the administrative law judge concludes she was.

Iowa Code section 96.5-2-a provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

2. Discharge for misconduct. If the department finds that the individual has been discharged for misconduct in connection with the individual's employment:

a. The individual shall be disqualified for benefits until the individual has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

871 IAC 24.32(1)a provides:

Discharge for misconduct.

(1) Definition.

a. "Misconduct" is defined as a deliberate act or omission by a worker which constitutes a material breach of the duties and obligations arising out of such worker's contract of employment. Misconduct as the term is used in the disqualification provision as being limited to conduct evincing such willful or wanton disregard of an employer's interest as is found in deliberate violation or disregard of standards of behavior which the employer has the right to expect of employees, or in carelessness or negligence of such degree of recurrence as to manifest equal culpability, wrongful intent or evil design, or to show an intentional and substantial disregard of the employer's interests or of the employee's

duties and obligations to the employer. On the other hand mere inefficiency, unsatisfactory conduct, failure in good performance as the result of inability or incapacity, inadvertencies or ordinary negligence in isolated instances, or good faith errors in judgment or discretion are not to be deemed misconduct within the meaning of the statute.

This definition has been accepted by the Iowa Supreme Court as accurately reflecting the intent of the legislature. Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979).

The employer has the burden of proof in establishing disqualifying job misconduct. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). In light of good faith effort, absences due to inability to obtain child care for a sick infant, although excessive, did not constitute misconduct. McCourtney v. Imprimis Technology, Inc., 465 N.W.2d 721 (Minn. App. 1991). Excessive unexcused absenteeism, a concept which includes tardiness, is misconduct. The determination of whether unexcused absenteeism is excessive necessarily requires consideration of past acts and warnings. Absenteeism arising out of matters of purely personal responsibilities such as child care and transportation are not excusable. Higgins v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 275 N.W.2d 187 (Iowa 1984).

The claimant's final absence was due to her lack of child care, a personal issue. The child care was for a sick four-year-old, not an infant. The claimant's absence due to lack of child care for her sick four-year-old arises from a purely personal responsibility. In addition, the claimant could have sought Family Medical Leave to cover these absences. Therefore, the claimant's absence is not excusable. The employer has met its burden of proof to show misconduct. The claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7 provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The claimant has received benefits in the amount of \$2,094.00 since filing her claim herein. Pursuant to this decision, those benefits now constitute an overpayment which must be repaid.

#### DECISION:

The representative's May 30, 2006 decision (reference 01) is reversed. The claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because she was discharged from work for misconduct. Benefits are withheld until she has worked in and has been paid wages for insured

work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible. The claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$2,094.00.

bas/kkf