

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

ANGELINE NAYOU

Claimant

APPEAL NO. 09A-UI-01149-ET

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

WAL-MART STORES INC

Employer

**OC: 12-14-08 R: 02
Claimant: Respondent (2-R)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge/Misconduct
Section 96.3-7 – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from the January 13, 2009, reference 02, decision that allowed benefits to the claimant. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call before Administrative Law Judge Julie Elder on February 9, 2008. The claimant did not participate in the hearing or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice. Kristine Wooley, Asset Protection Coordinator, participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer. Employer's Exhibit One was admitted into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the employer discharged the claimant for work-connected misconduct.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as part-time cashier for Wal-Mart from November 27, 2007 to December 17, 2008. On November 28, 2008, Asset Protection Coordinator Kristine Wooley received reports from customer service associates (CSA) that the claimant was overriding prices when she checked out other associates. Ms. Wooley had them cancel the transaction and do it again at the customer service desk, where there was a price difference of \$68.00. Ms. Wooley then researched the situation using the computer and found that when the claimant was the customer, she saved \$111.00 by having the cashier under ring or override the price, which requires the approval of a CSA, of the items she was purchasing. Further investigation revealed that five employees were involved and it was determined that the claimant was the "ringleader." On October 6, 2008, the claimant purchased a \$2.00 bracelet for \$1.00 after the cashier gave her a price override. On December 13, 2008, she purchased a \$20.00 coat for \$2.00. The other employees were not calling the CSA over because they can hit the override button without the assistance of the CSA. There were 13 total incidents found by Ms. Wooley involving the claimant, and her employment was terminated December 17, 2008, as was that of the other four employees involved (Employer's Exhibit One).

The claimant has claimed and received unemployment insurance benefits since her separation from this employer.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment for disqualifying job misconduct.

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.

The employer has the burden of proving disqualifying misconduct. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). Under these circumstances, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant's conduct demonstrated a willful disregard of the standards of behavior the employer has the right to expect of employees and shows an intentional and substantial disregard of the employer's interests and the employee's duties and obligations to the employer. The employer has met its burden of proving disqualifying job misconduct. Cosper v. IDJS, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). Benefits are denied.

The unemployment insurance law provides that benefits must be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later determined to be ineligible for benefits, even though the claimant acted in good faith and was not otherwise at fault. However, the overpayment will not be recovered when it is based on a reversal on appeal of an initial determination to award benefits on an issue regarding the claimant's employment separation if: (1) the benefits were not

received due to any fraud or willful misrepresentation by the claimant and (2) the employer did not participate in the initial proceeding to award benefits. The employer will not be charged for benefits whether or not the overpayment is recovered. Iowa Code section 96.3-7. In this case, the claimant has received benefits but was not eligible for those benefits. The matter of determining the amount of the overpayment and whether the overpayment should be recovered under Iowa Code section 96.3-7-b is remanded to the Agency.

DECISION:

The January 13, 2009, reference 02, decision is reversed. The claimant was discharged from employment due to job-related misconduct. Benefits are withheld until such time as she has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible. The matter of determining the amount of the overpayment and whether the overpayment should be recovered under Iowa Code section 96.3-7-b is remanded to the Agency.

Julie Elder
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

je/kjw