

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

VIRGINIA M THOMPSON
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 07A-UI-00770-JTT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

MOSAIC
Employer

**OC: 12/03/06 R: 01
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) - Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Virginia Thompson filed an appeal from the January 9, 2007, reference 01, decision that denied benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call on February 6, 2007. Ms. Thompson participated personally and was represented by Attorney Carl Sonksen. Attorney Lynn Corbeil of Johnson & Associates/TALX UC eXpress represented the employer. Charles Hickman, Dennis South and Marie Stichler were present as witnesses for the employer, but did not testify. Department Exhibits D-1 and D-2 were received into evidence. The hearing in this matter was consolidated with the hearing in Appeal Number 07A-UI-00771-JTT.

ISSUES:

Whether the claimant's appeal was timely.

Whether good cause exists to deem the claimant's appeal timely.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Virginia Thompson participated in the January 8, 2007 fact-finding interview concerning her separation from Mosaic. The January 9, 2007, reference 01, decision denying benefits was mailed to Ms. Thompson's last-known address of record on January 9, 2007. Ms. Thompson received the decision in a timely fashion, prior to the deadline. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by January 19, 2007. At some point, Ms. Thompson placed the decision in a sack where she keeps her mail and did not retrieve the decision from the sack until the beginning of February.

In the meantime, Iowa Workforce Development mailed Ms. Thompson a January 12, 2007, reference 02, overpayment decision on January 12, 2007. Ms. Thompson received that decision in a timely fashion, prior to the deadline for appeal. The reference 02 overpayment decision contained a January 22, 2007 deadline for appeal. On January 22, Ms. Thompson completed her appeal of the reference 02 overpayment decision and faxed her appeal to Iowa Workforce Development. The faxed appeal was received by the Appeals Section on

January 22. Because the January 12, reference 02, overpayment decision was based on the January 9, reference 01, decision denying benefits, the Agency treated Ms. Thompson's appeal as an appeal of both decisions. Ms. Thompson filed no other appeal of the decisions.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.6-2 provides:

2. Initial determination. A representative designated by the director shall promptly notify all interested parties to the claim of its filing, and the parties have ten days from the date of mailing the notice of the filing of the claim by ordinary mail to the last known address to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 10, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". Unless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was mailed to the claimant's last known address, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten-day deadline for appeal begins to run on the date Workforce Development mails the decision to the parties. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the Agency representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev., 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); Johnson v. Board of Adjustment, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

An appeal submitted by mail is deemed filed on the date it is mailed as shown by the postmark or in the absence of a postmark the postage meter mark of the envelope in which it was received, or if not postmarked or postage meter marked or if the mark is illegible, on the date entered on the document as the date of completion. See 871 AC 24.35(1)(a). See also Messina v. IDJS, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983). An appeal submitted by any other means is deemed filed on the date it is received by the Unemployment Insurance Division of Iowa Workforce Development. See 871 IAC 24.35(1)(b). Because Ms. Thompson's appeal was submitted by a fax received at the Agency on January 22, 2006, Ms. Thompson's appeal is deemed filed on January 22.

The evidence in the record establishes that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date of the January 9, reference 01, and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. Franklin v. IDJS, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. Beardslee v. IDJS, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also In re Appeal of Elliott, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. Hendren v. IESC, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); Smith v. IESC, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal of the January 9, reference 01 decision, but failed to do so for personal reasons.

The administrative law judge concludes that failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service. See 871 IAC 24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See, Beardslee v. IDJS, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and Franklin v. IDJS, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The Agency representative's January 9, 2007, reference 01, decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect.

James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/css