

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**JENNIFER M DIGMAN**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 13A-UI-03571-S2T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**SEDGWICK CLAIMS MANAGEMENT**  
Employer

**OC: 09/30/12**  
**Claimant: Respondent (2/R)**

Section 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Protest

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Sedgwick Claims Management (employer) appealed a representative's March 15, 2013 decision (reference 01) that allowed unemployment insurance benefits to Jennifer Digman (claimant) because it found the protest untimely. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on April 26, 2013. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Roxanne Rose, Hearings Representative; Danielle Campbell, Service Center Team Lead; and Judy Barlow, Colleague Resources Manager. Exhibits D-1 and D-2 admitted in evidence.

**ISSUE:**

The issue is whether the protest was filed in a timely manner and, if so, whether the claimant was separated from employment for any disqualifying reason.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant's notice of claim was mailed to the employer's address of record on October 5, 2012, and never received by the employer. The notice of claim contains a warning that any protest must be postmarked, faxed or returned not later than ten days from the initial mailing date. The employer received notice of charges to its account on February 25, 2013. On March 11, 2013, it filed a protest to those charges, which is after the ten-day period had expired.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

The first issue to be considered in this appeal is whether the employer's protest is timely. The administrative law judge determines it is.

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 employer did not have an opportunity to file a protest because the notice of claim was not received. Without notice of a disqualification, no meaningful opportunity for appeal exists. See *Smith v. Iowa Employment Security Commission*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The employer protested the charges to its account. Therefore, the protest shall be accepted as timely.

The issue of the claimant's separation from employment is remanded for determination.

**DECISION:**

The March 15, 2013, reference 01, decision is reversed. Employer has filed a timely protest. The issue of the claimant's separation from employment is remanded for determination.

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Beth A. Scheetz  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

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