

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

JASON JACOBS
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 07A-UI-03688-BT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

VICTORY LODGING INC
Employer

OC: 02/25/07 R: 02
Claimant: Respondent (1)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Victory Lodging, Inc. (employer) filed a timely appeal to an unemployment insurance decision dated March 20, 2007, reference 01, which held that Jason Jacobs (claimant) was eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on April 25, 2007. The claimant did not comply with the hearing notice instructions and did not call in to provide a telephone number at which he could be contacted, and therefore, did not participate. The employer participated through owner Mike Patel. Based on the evidence, the arguments of the parties, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law, and decision.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the employer discharged the claimant for work-related misconduct?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and having considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was employed as a full-time front desk clerk from approximately 2006 through February 23, 2007, when he was discharged for not doing his job. He watched television, played computer games, and failed to complete his job duties. He did not properly check the records, did not file the records, and did not print the business records. The claimant called the employer at 2:00 a.m. or 3:00 a.m. in the morning to ask for directions. He was given warnings on January 14, and January 19, 2007.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the employer discharged the claimant for work-connected misconduct. A claimant is not qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits if an employer has discharged the claimant for reasons constituting work-connected misconduct. Iowa Code § 96.5-2-a.

Iowa Code § 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 to prove the claimant was discharged for work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). The propriety of a discharge is not at issue in an unemployment insurance case. An employer may be justified in discharging an employee, but the employee's conduct may not amount to misconduct precluding the payment of unemployment compensation. The law limits disqualifying misconduct to substantial and willful wrongdoing or repeated carelessness or negligence that equals willful misconduct in culpability. Lee v. Employment Appeal Board, 616 N.W.2d 661, 665 (Iowa 2000).

When misconduct is alleged as the reason for the discharge and subsequent disqualification of benefits, it is incumbent upon the employer to present evidence in support of its allegations. Allegations of misconduct or dishonesty without additional evidence shall not be sufficient to result in disqualification. 871 IAC 24.32(4). The employer participated in the hearing but only provided general allegations of misconduct without specific details, dates, and times. The employer failed to meet its burden. Work-connected misconduct has not been established in this case and benefits are allowed.

The employer is not a base period employer and its account is not subject to any charges during the claimant's current benefit year. If the claimant establishes a subsequent benefit year, the wage credits he earned from the employer would be subject to charge since the employer discharged him for non-disqualifying reasons.

DECISION:

The unemployment insurance decision dated March 20, 2007, reference 01, is affirmed. The claimant was discharged. Misconduct has not been established. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

Susan D. Ackerman
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

sda/kjw