

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**JIMMY L FLANNIGAN**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 08A-UI-00154-SWT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**PAPETTI'S OF IOWA**  
Employer

**OC: 10/14/07 R: 03  
Claimant: Respondent (1)**

Section 96.5-2-a - Discharge

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated December 19, 2007, reference 04, that concluded the claimant's discharge was not for work-connected misconduct. A telephone hearing was held on January 22, 2008. The parties were properly notified about the hearing. The claimant participated in the hearing. No one participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer.

**ISSUE:**

Was the claimant discharged for work-connected misconduct?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The claimant worked for the employer as a maintenance mechanic from November 2, 2007, to December 4, 2007. The claimant was discharged based on an allegation that the claimant had removed some product from a freezer and concealed it between some pallets on November 29, 2007. This allegation was untrue as the claimant never removed or hid any products.

The employer's account is not presently chargeable for benefits paid to the claimant since it is not a base period employer on the claim.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

The issue in this case is whether the claimant was discharged for work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law.

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 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).

No willful and substantial misconduct has been proven in this case. The claimant denied taking or concealing any product and his testimony was credible. The employer did not participate in the hearing to provide any evidence contradicting the claimant's testimony.

The employer's account is not presently chargeable for benefits paid to the claimant since it is not a base period employer on the claim. If the employer becomes a base period employer in a future benefit year, its account may be chargeable for benefits paid to the claimant based on this separation from employment.

**DECISION:**

The unemployment insurance decision dated December 19, 2007, reference 04, is affirmed. The claimant is qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits, if he is otherwise eligible.

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Steven A. Wise  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

saw/pjs