

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

MINDI M LAWLESS
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 10A-UI-00026-MT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

SOFTRONICS LTD
Employer

**OC: 11/22/09
Claimant: Respondent (2R)**

Section 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Protest

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer appealed the representative's decision dated December 28, 2009, reference 01, that concluded it failed to file a timely protest regarding the claimant's separation of employment on November 4, 2009, and no disqualification of unemployment insurance benefits was imposed. A telephone hearing was scheduled and held on February 15, 2010, pursuant to due notice. Employer participated by Kristin Kujawa, Office Manager and Robert Sternowski, President. Exhibit One was admitted into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue in this matter is whether the employer's protest is timely.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant's notice of claim was mailed to the employer's address of record on December 1, 2009, and received by the employer within ten days. The notice of claim contains a warning that any protest must be postmarked or returned not later than ten days from the initial mailing date. The employer did not affect a protest until December 14, 2009, which is after the ten-day period had expired. Employer was out of the office December 8 through December 11, 2009 because of a snow storm. Employer immediately filed on Monday December 14, 2009 after the storm had cleared.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.6-2 provides in pertinent part:

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.

Another portion of this same Code section dealing with timeliness of an appeal from a representative's decision states that such an appeal must be filed within ten days after notification of that decision was mailed. In addressing an issue of timeliness of an appeal under that portion of this Code section, the Iowa Supreme Court held that this statute prescribing the time for notice of appeal clearly limits the time to do so, and that compliance with the appeal notice provision is mandatory and jurisdictional. Beardslee v. IDJS, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979).

The administrative law judge considers the reasoning and holding of that court in that decision to be controlling on this portion of that same Iowa Code section which deals with a time limit in which to file a protest after notification of the filing of the claim has been mailed. The employer has shown good cause for not complying with the jurisdictional time limit. Therefore, the administrative law judge is with jurisdiction to entertain any protest regarding the separation from employment.

The administrative law judge concludes the employer failed to effect a timely protest within the time period prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law, and the delay was due to a storm which closed the office. The administrative law judge further concludes that the employer has effected a timely protest pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6-2, and the administrative law judge has jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the claimant's termination of employment. See Beardslee v. IDJS, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979); Franklin v. IDJS, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979) and Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company v. Employment Appeal Board, 465 N.W.2d 674 (Iowa App. 1990).

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated December 28, 2009, reference 01, is reversed. The employer has filed a timely protest, and the decision of the representative shall be remanded for a fact finding hearing on the issues.

Marlon Mormann
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

mdm/pjs