

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

JENNIFER N BROWN
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 13A-UI-05389-HT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

COPY PLUS LLC
Employer

OC: 04/07/13
Claimant: Respondent (2-R)

Section 96.5(2)a – Discharge

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer, Copy Plus, filed an appeal from a decision dated May 3, 2013, reference 01. The decision allowed benefits to the claimant, Jennifer Brown. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call on June 27, 2013. The claimant participated on her own behalf. The employer participated by Co-Owners Becky Fletcher and Dave Fletcher.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct sufficient to warrant a denial of unemployment benefits.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Jennifer Brown was employed by Copy Plus from May 9, 2012 until April 6, 2013 as a part-time associate. During the course of her employment she received three written warnings for poor performance and failure to follow instructions.

On March 19, 2013, a customer came in and Ms. Brown contacted the US Cellular call center. During that call she was told not to activate the customer's account until Ms. Brown had spoken with an ADSSS. Ms. Brown did not do so and activated the account anyway.

The employer learned of this on April 1, 2013, when US Cellular called Co-Owner Becky Fletcher and reprimanded her for the claimant's actions which might have caused problems for the employer's future relationship with US Cellular.

Ms. Brown was interviewed by the employer and at first denied doing the activation. When confronted with the call logs from the US Cellular call center she said she had had permission to activate the account. This was not confirmed by the call logs or the reprimand from US Cellular. The claimant was discharged April 6, 2013, for a final incident of poor work performance.

Jennifer Brown has received unemployment benefits since filing a claim with an effective date of April 7, 2013.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF 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 claimant was discharged for failing and refusing to follow instructions from a supervisor, company policy and policies governing the employer business agreement with US Cellular. Her refusal to follow the instructions given by the call center not to activate an account before talking with the ADSSS resulted in the employer being reprimanded by US Cellular for the claimant's actions.

This is not an isolated incident but the final one in a long course of Ms. Brown's not following instructions and orders given by the employer. This is a violation of the duties and responsibilities the employer has the right to expect of an employee and conduct not in the best interests of the employer. The claimant is disqualified.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7, as amended in 2008, provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits.

a. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from

any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

b. (1) If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5. However, provided the benefits were not received as the result of fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual, benefits shall not be recovered from an individual if the employer did not participate in the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to section 96.6, subsection 2, and an overpayment occurred because of a subsequent reversal on appeal regarding the issue of the individual's separation from employment. The employer shall not be charged with the benefits.

(2) An accounting firm, agent, unemployment insurance accounting firm, or other entity that represents an employer in unemployment claim matters and demonstrates a continuous pattern of failing to participate in the initial determinations to award benefits, as determined and defined by rule by the department, shall be denied permission by the department to represent any employers in unemployment insurance matters. This subparagraph does not apply to attorneys or counselors admitted to practice in the courts of this state pursuant to section 602.10101.

The claimant has received unemployment benefits to which she is not entitled. The question of whether the claimant must repay these benefits is remanded to the UIS division.

DECISION:

The representative's decision of May 3, 2013, reference 01, is reversed. Jennifer Brown is disqualified and benefits are withheld until she has earned ten times her weekly benefit amount in insured work, provided she is otherwise eligible. The issue of whether the claimant must repay the unemployment benefits is remanded to UIS division for determination.

Bonny G. Hendricksmeier
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bgh/css