

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**KAREN L PERRY**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 11A-UI-01099-MT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**IOWA RENEWABLE  
ENERGY ASSOCIATION**  
Employer

**OC: 11/14/10  
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated January 18, 2011, reference 01, which held claimant ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on March 22, 2011. Employer participated by Steve Fugate, managing director; Shelly Berkowitz, interim director; and Kimberly Dickey, board president; and represented by Ray Rinkol, attorney at law. Claimant participated and was represented by Lee Ann Tyler, attorney at law, with witnesses Dawn Sutter and Rod Ness. Exhibits A through K and One through Four were admitted into evidence.

**ISSUE:**

The issue in this matter is whether claimant was discharged for misconduct.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and having considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant last worked for employer on November 16, 2010.

Claimant was discharged on November 16, 2010 by employer because claimant wrote checks to herself without authorization and documentation. Claimant was demoted and warned on October 15, 2010 due to work performance issues, which lowered her rate of pay. Claimant overpaid herself on salary three times because she failed to pay herself a demoted pay rate. Claimant also reimbursed herself for expenses not authorized and without documentation. Claimant was not authorized to make any of these payments to herself. Claimant made six payments to herself on the company account on and after September 9, 2010. Employer discovered the irregularities November 11, 2010 and discharged claimant November 16, 2010. Claimant was not bank-authorized to write checks on behalf of the company during the times in question. Claimant has an MBA education. Claimant had a warning on her record.

## 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.

871 IAC 24.32(8) provides:

(8) Past acts of misconduct. While past acts and warnings can be used to determine the magnitude of a current act of misconduct, a discharge for misconduct cannot be based on such past act or acts. The termination of employment must be based on a current act.

871 IAC 24.32(4) provides:

(4) Report required. The claimant's statement and the employer's statement must give detailed facts as to the specific reason for the claimant's discharge. Allegations of misconduct or dishonesty without additional evidence shall not be sufficient to result in disqualification. If the employer is unwilling to furnish available evidence to corroborate the allegation, misconduct cannot be established. In cases where a suspension or disciplinary layoff exists, the claimant is considered as discharged, and the issue of misconduct shall be resolved.

The gravity of the incident, number of policy violations, and prior warnings are factors considered when analyzing misconduct. The lack of a current warning may detract from a finding of an intentional policy violation.

In this matter, the evidence established that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct when claimant violated employer's policy concerning misuse of company funds. Claimant was warned concerning this policy.

The last incident, which brought about the discharge, constitutes misconduct because claimant wrote checks without authorization. Claimant also signed checks when she was not authorized to do so by bank documents. Claimant's education as an MBA weighs heavily toward a finding that claimant knew or should have known that it was highly improper to write checks to herself and to sign checks when she was not authorized at the bank. This is an intentional act in violation of a duty owed employer. Claimant paid herself for expenses and pay without authorization. Claimant paid herself for expenses without proper documentation and authorization. The administrative law judge holds that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct and, as such, is disqualified for the receipt of unemployment insurance benefits.

**DECISION:**

The decision of the representative dated January 18, 2011, reference 01, is affirmed. Unemployment insurance benefits shall be withheld until claimant has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times claimant's weekly benefit amount, provided claimant is otherwise eligible.

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Marlon Mormann  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

mdm/kjw