

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Section
1000 East Grand—Des Moines, Iowa 50319
DECISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
68-0157 (7-97) – 3091078 - EI

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Appeal Number: 04A-UI-12841-H2T
OC: 10-03-04 R: 03
Claimant: Appellant (2)

This Decision Shall Become Final, unless within fifteen (15) days from the date below, you or any interested party appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by submitting either a signed letter or a signed written Notice of Appeal, directly to the **Employment Appeal Board, 4th Floor—Lucas Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319**.

The appeal period will be extended to the next business day if the last day to appeal falls on a weekend or a legal holiday.

STATE CLEARLY

1. The name, address and social security number of the claimant.
2. A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken.
3. That an appeal from such decision is being made and such appeal is signed.
4. The grounds upon which such appeal is based.

YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in this appeal or you may obtain a lawyer or other interested party to do so provided there is no expense to Workforce Development. If you wish to be represented by a lawyer, you may obtain the services of either a private attorney or one whose services are paid for with public funds. It is important that you file your claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

(Administrative Law Judge)

(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge/Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant filed a timely appeal from the November 22, 2004, reference 02, decision that denied benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on December 22, 2004. The claimant did participate. The employer did participate through Stormy Kolden, Recruiter.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as an assembly operator at Rockwell International full time beginning June 28, 2004 through August 24, 2004 when he was discharged. The claimant was discharged for getting into an argument with a coworker on August 20, 2004 when he went to pick up his paycheck at the Volt Office. The claimant was arguing with Ms. Kolden about

whether he should be allowed to pick up his paycheck at the office or have to wait for it to be mailed to him. The previous week the claimant and his other coworkers had been given notice via a sign on the door that paychecks would no longer be handed out on Friday, but instead would be mailed out on Friday. When the claimant arrived on Friday to pick up his paycheck he was told it would be mailed to him. Another coworker, Tim Rolling, came in to pick up his paycheck. The claimant then got into a disagreement with Mr. Rolling and was yelling at Mr. Rolling about whether he was to pick up his paycheck or have it mailed to him. At one point the claimant told Mr. Rolling to leave the office and in fact followed him out the door that day. Mr. Rolling later reported to Ms. Kolden that he felt threatened by the claimant's behavior. Based on the claimant's argument with Mr. Rolling and Ms. Kolden on August 20, 2004 and his perceived disruptive and argumentative behavior, Volt discharged the claimant from his position at Rockwell.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason.

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.

This definition has been accepted by the Iowa Supreme Court as accurately reflecting the intent of the legislature. Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979).

The employer has the burden of proof in establishing disqualifying job misconduct. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). The employer discharged the claimant and has the burden of proof to show misconduct. Misconduct serious enough to warrant discharge is not necessarily serious enough to warrant a denial of job insurance benefits. Such misconduct must be "substantial." When based on carelessness, the carelessness must actually indicate a "wrongful intent" to be disqualifying in nature. Newman v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa App. 1984). Poor work performance is not misconduct in the absence of evidence of intent. Miller v. Employment Appeal Board, 423 N.W.2d 211 (Iowa App. 1988).

While the administrative law judge can certainly understand how the claimant could be perceived as argumentative, the employer's evidence does not establish that the claimant deliberately and intentionally acted in a manner he knew to be contrary to the employer's interests or standards. Arguing about picking up a paycheck is not substantial misconduct under these circumstances. There was no wanton or willful disregard of the employer's standards. In short, substantial misconduct has not been established by the evidence. While the employer may have had good cause to discharge, conduct, which might warrant a discharge from employment will not necessarily sustain a disqualification from job insurance benefits. Budding v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 337 N.W.2d 219 (Iowa App. 1983).

DECISION:

The November 22, 2004, reference 02, decision is reversed. The claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

tkh/pjs