

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

KYLE A COGHLAN
Claimant

US POSTAL SERVICE/EQUIFA
Employer

APPEAL 21A-UI-08608-DG-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 03/29/20
Claimant: Appellant (2)

Iowa Code § 96.5(1) – Voluntary Quitting
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.26(1) – Voluntary Quitting – Change in Contract of Hire

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated March 16, 2021, (reference 01) that held claimant ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a hearing was scheduled for and held on June 9, 2021. Claimant participated. Employer failed to respond to the hearing notice and did not participate. Claimant's Exhibits 1-2 were admitted into evidence. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative record.

ISSUE:

The issue in this matter is whether claimant quit for good cause attributable to employer?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant last worked for employer on January 25, 2021. Claimant left the employment on that date because of a substantial change in his contract of hire.

Claimant responded to an advertisement for employment from this employer which offered part-time employment and a good starting wage. Claimant began his orientation on or about January 21, 2021. On or about January 25, 2021 claimant began working for employer. During his first day of work he was told that he would be working 6-7 days a week and over 8 hours every day. Claimant had been told at the time of hire that he would be working part-time, and that he could move to full-time later if he found a job or route that he liked.

Claimant decided that he had to quit on January 25, 2021 after he was told that the information he relied upon at the time of hire was not correct.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant did voluntarily leave the employment with good cause attributable to the employer.

Iowa Code section 96.5(1) provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits, regardless of the source of the individual's wage credits:

1. *Voluntary quitting.* If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual's employer, if so found by the department.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.26(1) provides:

Voluntary quit with good cause attributable to the employer and separations not considered to be voluntary quits. The following are reasons for a claimant leaving employment with good cause attributable to the employer:

(1) A change in the contract of hire. An employer's willful breach of contract of hire shall not be a disqualifiable issue. This would include any change that would jeopardize the worker's safety, health or morals. The change of contract of hire must be substantial in nature and could involve changes in working hours, shifts, remuneration, location of employment, drastic modification in type of work, etc. Minor changes in a worker's routine on the job would not constitute a change of contract of hire.

In general, a substantial pay reduction of 25 to 35 percent or a similar reduction of working hours creates good cause attributable to the employer for a resignation. *Dehmel v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 433 N.W.2d 700 (Iowa 1988). A notice of an intent to quit had been required by *Cobb v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 506 N.W.2d 445, 447-78 (Iowa 1993), *Suluki v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 503 N.W.2d 402, 405 (Iowa 1993), and *Swanson v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 554 N.W.2d 294, 296 (Iowa Ct. App. 1996). Those cases required an employee to give an employer notice of intent to quit, thus giving the employer an opportunity to cure working conditions. However, in 1995, the Iowa Administrative Code was amended to include an intent-to-quit requirement. The requirement was only added to rule 871-24.26(6)(b), the provision addressing work-related health problems. No intent-to-quit requirement was added to rule 871-24.26(4), the intolerable working conditions provision. Our supreme court concluded that, because the intent-to-quit requirement was added to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.26(6)(b) but not 871-24.26(4), notice of intent to quit is not required for intolerable working conditions. *Hy-Vee, Inc. v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 710 N.W.2d 1 (Iowa 2005). A refusal to accept a night shift position at a sanitarium constitutes a good cause quit attributable to the employer when that shift would endanger the claimant's health. *Forrest Park Sanitarium v. Miller*, 333 Iowa 1341, 11 N.W.2d 582 (Iowa 1943).

Since there was no disqualifying basis for the change in the contract of hire, the quit because of those significant changes was with good cause attributable to the employer. Inasmuch as the employer has not established misconduct as a reason for the effective demotion, the change of the original terms of hire is considered substantial. Thus the separation was with good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are allowed.

Note to Claimant: If this decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits and you disagree with this decision, you may file an appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision. Individuals who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits, but who are currently unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19 may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program.** Additional information on how to apply for PUA can be found

at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>. If this decision becomes final, or if you are not eligible for PUA, you may have an overpayment of benefits.

DECISION:

The March 16, 2021, (reference 01) decision is reversed. The claimant voluntarily left the employment with good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Duane L. Golden". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Duane L. Golden
Administrative Law Judge

June 23, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

dlg/scn