

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

MELISSA A THOMPSON
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 15A-UI-13018-JTT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

TYSON RETAIL DELI MEATS INC
Employer

OC: 12/28/14
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code Section 96.5(5) – Pension Deduction
Iowa Code Section 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Melissa Thompson filed an appeal from the November 13, 2015, reference 01, decision that denied benefits for the period of December 28, 2014 through January 17, 2015, based on an Agency conclusion that she had received a lump sum pension payment that was deductible from her unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on December 15, 2015. Ms. Thompson participated. The employer did not respond to the hearing notice instructions to provide a telephone number for the hearing and did not participate. The hearing in this matter was consolidated with the hearing in Appeal Number 15A-UI-13019-JTT. Department Exhibits D-1, D-2 and D-3 were received into evidence.

ISSUE:

Whether the appeal was timely. Whether there is good cause to treat the appeal as timely.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: On November 13, 2015, Iowa Workforce Development mailed two decisions to claimant Melissa Thompson's last-known address of record. The reference 01 decision denied benefits for the period of December 28, 2014 through January 17, 2015, based on an Agency conclusion that Ms. Thompson had received a lump sum pension payment that was deductible from her unemployment insurance benefits. The reference 02 decision held that Ms. Thompson had been overpaid \$1,248.00 in benefits for the three weeks between December 28, 2014 and January 17, 2015, based on the reference 01 decision that denied benefits for the three weeks in question. Both decisions contained a warning that an appeal from the decision must be postmarked by November 23, 2015 or received by the Appeals Section by that date. Ms. Thompson received both decisions in a timely manner, prior to the deadline for appeal. The back of each decision contained clear and concise instructions regarding filing an appeal from the decision. Ms. Thompson did not note the appeal deadline when she received and reviewed the decisions. At about 7:00 p.m. on November 24, 2015, Ms. Thompson accessed the Workforce Development website and completed an online appeal. The Appeals Bureau received the appeal on November 24, 2015 and docketed the appeal as filed on that date.

Though Ms. Thompson referenced only the reference 02 overpayment decision in the appeal, the Appeals Bureau treated the appeal as also an appeal from the reference 01 decision that prompted the reference 02 overpayment decision.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code § 96.6-2 provides:

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. The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 10, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". Unless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was mailed to the claimant's last known address, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten-day deadline for appeal begins to run on the date Workforce Development mails the decision to the parties. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the Agency representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev., 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); Johnson v. Board of Adjustment, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

An appeal submitted by mail is deemed filed on the date it is mailed as shown by the postmark or in the absence of a postmark the postage meter mark of the envelope in which it was received, or if not postmarked or postage meter marked or if the mark is illegible, on the date entered on the document as the date of completion. See 871 AC 24.35(1)(a). See also Messina v. IDJS, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983). An appeal submitted by any other means is deemed filed on the date it is received by the Unemployment Insurance Division of Iowa Workforce Development. See 871 IAC 24.35(1)(b).

Ms. Thompson's appeal from both decisions was filed on November 24, 2015, the date on which the electronically transmitted appeal was received by the Appeals Bureau.

The evidence in the record establishes that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. Franklin v. IDJS, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. Beardslee v. IDJS, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also In re Appeal of Elliott, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. Hendren v. IESC, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); Smith v. IESC, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973).

The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal from both decisions. Ms. Thompson received the decisions in a timely manner, but then delayed filing her appeal until November 24, 2015.

The administrative law judge concludes that Ms. Thompson's failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Workforce Development error or misinformation or due to delay or other action of the United States Postal Service. See 871 IAC 24.35(2). Because the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6(2), the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to disturb the decision from which Ms. Thompson appealed. See, Beardslee v. IDJS, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and Franklin v. IDJS, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The November 13, 2015, reference 01, decision is affirmed. The claimant's appeal was untimely. The decision that denied benefits for the period of December 28, 2014 through January 17, 2015, based on an Agency conclusion that the claimant received a lump sum pension payment that was deductible from her unemployment insurance benefits, remains in effect.

James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/pjs

