

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

BRADLEY L JOHNSON
Claimant

**VERMEER MANUFACTURING COMPANY
INC**
Employer

APPEAL NO. 14A-UI-02450-MT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 03/31/13
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 February 27, 2014, reference 02, which held claimant ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a hearing was scheduled for and held on March 26, 2014. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated by Becky Fowler, Human Resource Business Partner and Cory Gifford, Area Manager. Exhibit One was 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 considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant last worked for employer on February 6, 2014.

Employer discharged claimant on February 6, 2014 because claimant incurred a fork lift accident at work and did not report such. Claimant colluded with the other fork lift driver to cover up the incident. Employer requires immediate reports on even minor accidents. Claimant would not have been discharged had he not agreed with the coworker to not report. Employer had not issued claimant any prior warnings. Claimant was informed of the policy.

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 fails to establish that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct when claimant violated employer's policy concerning reporting accidents. Claimant was informed concerning this policy.

The last incident, which brought about the discharge, constitutes misconduct because claimant colluded with a coworker to cover up an accident. This is an intentional policy violation. While the accident alone is not misconduct, the intentional act of covering it up is misconduct.

Claimant engaged in intentional conduct in direct violation of policy. Employer's version is found accurate as it relies on claimant's statements made close in time to the event which are more credible. 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 February 27, 2014, reference 02, 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.

Marlon Mormann
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

mdm/css