

**BEFORE THE
EMPLOYMENT APPEAL BOARD
Lucas State Office Building
Fourth floor
Des Moines, Iowa 50319**

ADRIANNA CHAVARRIA

Claimant

and

SWIFT PORK COMPANY

Employer

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HEARING NUMBER: 17BUI-01165

**EMPLOYMENT APPEAL BOARD
DECISION**

SECTION: 10A.601 Employment Appeal Board Review

D E C I S I O N

FINDINGS OF FACT:

A hearing in the above matter was scheduled for February 22, 2017 in which the issues to be determined were whether the claimant was laid off; discharged for misconduct; or whether the claimant voluntarily left for good cause attributable to the employer.

During the hearing, the Claimant indicated that she stayed in Mexico beyond the December 19th return date to take care of her father who had surgery. When she returned, she was determined to have quit. The administrative law judge's decision was issued February 24, 2017, which determined that the Claimant was disqualified for benefits based on a voluntary quit without good cause attributable to the Employer. The administrative law judge's decision has been appealed to the Employment Appeal Board.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 10A.601(4) (2015) provides:

5. Appeal board review. The appeal board may on its own motion affirm, modify, or set aside any decision of an administrative law judge on the basis of the evidence previously submitted in such case, or direct the taking of additional evidence, or may permit any of the parties to such decision to initiate further appeals before it. The appeal board shall permit such further appeal by any of the parties interested in a decision of an administrative law judge and by the representative whose decision has been overruled or modified by the administrative law judge. The appeal board shall review the case pursuant to rules adopted by the appeal board. The appeal board shall promptly notify the interested parties of its findings and decision.

The Employment Appeal Board concludes that the record as it stands is insufficient for the Board to issue a decision on the merits of the case. As the Iowa Court of Appeals noted in *Baker v. Employment Appeal Board*, 551 N.W. 2d 646 (Iowa App. 1996), the administrative law judge has a heightened duty to develop the record from available evidence and testimony given the administrative law judge's presumed expertise. The Claimant was already on an authorized vacation during which time he father had surgery for which the Claimant stayed to take care of him. The administrative law judge law made no inquiry or consideration as to whether the Claimant's continued absence beyond December 19, 2016 came under the exception of Iowa Code section 96.5(1)"c" as follows:

The individual left employment for the necessary and sole purpose of taking care of a member of the individual's immediate family who was then injured or ill, and if after said member of the family sufficiently recovered, the individual immediately returned to and offered the individual's services to the individual's employer, provided, however, that during such period the individual did not accept any other employment.

Since we do not know the answers to these questions, the Board must remand this matter for the taking of additional evidence to determine whether the Claimant's quit came under this exception.

DECISION:

The decision of the administrative law judge dated February 22, 2017 is not vacated and remains in force unless and until the Department makes a differing determination pursuant to this remand. This matter is remanded to an administrative law judge in the Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau, for further development of the record consistent with this decision, unless otherwise already addressed. The administrative law judge shall conduct a hearing following due notice, if necessary. If a hearing is held, then the administrative law judge shall issue a decision which provides the parties appeal rights.

Kim D. Schmett

Ashley R. Koopmans
