

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

WANDA L SIEMENS
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 07A-UI-11092-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**SAC & FOX TRIBE
MESKWAKI BINGO CASINO & HOTEL**
Employer

**OC: 10/28/07 R: 02
Claimant: Respondent (2)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct
Section 96.3-7 – Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Meskwaki Bingo Casino & Hotel (employer) appealed a representative's November 21, 2007 decision (reference 02) that concluded Wanda Siemens (claimant) was discharged and there was no evidence of willful or deliberate misconduct. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for December 17, 2007. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Michael Ziemer, Director of Finance; Scott Knutson, Director of Security; and Pat Forck, Controller. David Bernard observed the hearing. The employer offered and Exhibits One and Two were received into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the 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 that: The claimant was hired on August 14, 1997, as a full-time revenue auditor. The claimant received the employer's handbook. On October 18, 2007, law enforcement notified the employer they were conducting a search on the claimant's residence and belongings for drug-related items. Based on the employer's reasonable suspicion, the claimant submitted to a preliminary urine test. The claimant tested positive for methamphetamine. The claimant admitted to using methamphetamine two days prior to the testing. The employer suspended the claimant pending further testing. The results of the testing were received by the employer on October 30, 2007. The claimant tested positive for methamphetamine. The employer terminated the claimant November 1, 2007

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged for misconduct.

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.

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). An employer has a right to expect employees to follow instructions in the performance of the job. The claimant disregarded the employer's right by failing to follow the employer's instructions. She admitted to using methamphetamines, an illegal substance, during her employment. The claimant's admission to use of an illegal substance during her employment and her positive test for that substance are clear evidence of misconduct. The claimant's disregard of the employer's interests is misconduct. As such the claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7 provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to

the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The claimant has received benefits since filing the claim herein. Pursuant to this decision, those benefits now constitute an overpayment which must be repaid.

DECISION:

The representative's November 21, 2007 decision (reference 02) is reversed. The claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because the claimant was discharged from work for misconduct. Benefits are withheld until the claimant has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the claimant's weekly benefit amount provided the claimant is otherwise eligible. The claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$1,240.00.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/css