

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

DOLPHUS J COLEMAN
Claimant

APPEAL NO: 14A-UI-13485-ET

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

JELD-WEN INC
Employer

OC: 11/30/14
Claimant: Respondent (2)

Section 96.5-1 – Voluntary Leaving
Section 96.3-7 – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from the December 24, 2014, reference 01, decision that allowed benefits to the claimant. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call before Administrative Law Judge Julie Elder on January 27, 2015. The claimant did not respond to the hearing notice by providing a phone number where he could be reached at the date and time of the hearing as evidenced by the absence of his name and phone number on the Clear2There screen showing whether the parties have called in for the hearing as instructed by the hearing notice. The claimant did not participate in the hearing or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice. Cole Johnson, Human Resources Associate, participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer.

The administrative law judge takes official notice of the administrative file.

ISSUE:

The issues are whether the claimant voluntarily left his employment and whether he is overpaid unemployment benefits.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as a full-time production laborer on the glass line for Jeld-Wen from September 23, 2013 to July 21, 2014. The claimant had verbally told the employer he was going to resign but had not done so formally or announced his last day to the employer as of July 15, 2014.

The claimant called the employer and reported he would not be at work July 16, 2014. He then failed to call the employer or report for work July 17, 18, and 21, 2014; the employer then determined the claimant voluntarily quit his job.

The claimant has claimed and received unemployment insurance benefits in the amount of \$1836 since his separation from this employer.

The employer did not participate personally in the fact-finding interview but did submit a written statement indicating the claimant voluntarily quit by failing to call or show up for work for three consecutive work days. The written statement did not include the name and phone number of a Jeld-Wen employee with first-hand information that could be contacted for rebuttal. The employer also failed to submit a specific rule or policy the claimant violated.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant voluntarily left his employment without good cause attributable to the employer.

Iowa Code § 96.5-1 provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

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. 871-24.25(4) provides:

Voluntary quit without good cause. In general, a voluntary quit means discontinuing the employment because the employee no longer desires to remain in the relationship of an employee with the employer from whom the employee has separated. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.5. However, the claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving Iowa Code section 96.5, subsection (1), paragraphs "a" through "i," and subsection 10. The following reasons for a voluntary quit shall be presumed to be without good cause attributable to the employer:

(4) The claimant was absent for three days without giving notice to employer in violation of company rule.

Inasmuch as the claimant failed to report for work or notify the employer for three consecutive work days in violation of the employer's policy, he is considered to have voluntarily left his employment without good cause attributable to the employer. Therefore, benefits are denied.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.10 provides:

Employer and employer representative participation in fact-finding interviews.

(1) "Participate," as the term is used for employers in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means submitting detailed factual information of the quantity and quality that if unrebutted would be sufficient to result in a decision favorable to the employer. The most effective means to participate is to provide live testimony at the interview from a witness with firsthand knowledge of the events leading to the separation. If no live testimony is provided, the employer must provide the name and telephone number of an employee with firsthand information who may be contacted, if necessary, for rebuttal. A party may also participate by providing detailed written statements or documents that provide detailed factual information of the events leading to separation. At a minimum,

the information provided by the employer or the employer's representative must identify the dates and particular circumstances of the incident or incidents, including, in the case of discharge, the act or omissions of the claimant or, in the event of a voluntary separation, the stated reason for the quit. The specific rule or policy must be submitted if the claimant was discharged for violating such rule or policy. In the case of discharge for attendance violations, the information must include the circumstances of all incidents the employer or the employer's representative contends meet the definition of unexcused absences as set forth in 871—subrule 24.32(7). On the other hand, written or oral statements or general conclusions without supporting detailed factual information and information submitted after the fact-finding decision has been issued are not considered participation within the meaning of the statute.

(2) "A continuous pattern of nonparticipation in the initial determination to award benefits," pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, as the term is used for an entity representing employers, means on 25 or more occasions in a calendar quarter beginning with the first calendar quarter of 2009, the entity files appeals after failing to participate. Appeals filed but withdrawn before the day of the contested case hearing will not be considered in determining if a continuous pattern of nonparticipation exists. The division administrator shall notify the employer's representative in writing after each such appeal.

(3) If the division administrator finds that an entity representing employers as defined in Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, has engaged in a continuous pattern of nonparticipation, the division administrator shall suspend said representative for a period of up to six months on the first occasion, up to one year on the second occasion and up to ten years on the third or subsequent occasion. Suspension by the division administrator constitutes final agency action and may be appealed pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.19.

(4) "Fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual," as the term is used for claimants in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means providing knowingly false statements or knowingly false denials of material facts for the purpose of obtaining unemployment insurance benefits. Statements or denials may be either oral or written by the claimant. Inadvertent misstatements or mistakes made in good faith are not considered fraud or willful misrepresentation.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 96.3(7)"b" as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2160.

The unemployment insurance law provides that benefits must be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later determined to be ineligible for benefits, even though the claimant acted in good faith and was not otherwise at fault. However, the overpayment will not be recovered when it is based on a reversal on appeal of an initial determination to award benefits on an issue regarding the claimant's employment separation if: (1) the benefits were not received due to any fraud or willful misrepresentation by the claimant and (2) the employer did not participate in the initial proceeding to award benefits. In this case, the claimant has received benefits but was not eligible for those benefits. There is no evidence the claimant received benefits due to fraud or willful misrepresentation and the employer did not participate in the fact-finding interview personally or through sufficient written statements as it did not provide the name and phone number of a Jeld-Wen employee with first-hand knowledge of the situation or a copy of the specific rule or policy the claimant violated. For those two reasons,

the administrative law judge concludes the employer did not participate in the fact-finding interview within the meaning of that term's definition. Consequently, the claimant's overpayment of benefits must be waived and the employer's account shall be charged for the benefits he has received to date in the amount of \$1836.

DECISION:

The December 24, 2014, reference 01, decision is reversed. The claimant voluntarily left his employment without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are withheld until such time as he has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times his weekly benefit amount, provided he is otherwise eligible. The claimant's overpayment is waived and the employer's account shall be charged the \$1836 he has received in benefits to date.

Julie Elder
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

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