

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

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**MEGAN S SULLIVAN**  
Claimant

**APPEAL 20A-UI-06963-DG-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**NEWTON PROFESSIONAL PURCHASING I**  
Employer

**OC: 10/13/19**  
**Claimant: Respondent (4)**

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Iowa Code § 96.5(3)a – Failure to Accept Work  
Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Ability to and Availability for Work

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer filed an appeal from the June 17, 2020, (reference 02) unemployment insurance decision that allowed benefits based upon refusing an offer of work. After due notice was issued, a telephone conference hearing was held on July 31, 2020. Claimant did not participate. Employer participated through John Zimmerman, Human Resources Manager.

**ISSUES:**

Was a suitable offer of work made to the claimant?  
If so, did the claimant fail to accept and was the failure to do so for a good cause reason?  
Is the claimant able and available for work?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having heard the testimony and having reviewed the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Employer made an offer of work to claimant by phone on April 14, 2020. Claimant answered the phone, and the terms of the offer were explained to claimant.

Employer's offer included the same wages and hours she had received prior to being laid off by employer on April 10, 2020. Claimant did not accept employer's offer of work because she believed she may have been at risk for contracting the covid-19 virus.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant declined an offer of work because she was not able and available for work.

Iowa Code section 96.5(3)a provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:  
3. *Failure to accept work.* If the department finds that an individual has failed, without good cause, either to apply for available, suitable work when

directed by the department or to accept suitable work when offered that individual. The department shall, if possible, furnish the individual with the names of employers which are seeking employees. The individual shall apply to and obtain the signatures of the employers designated by the department on forms provided by the department. However, the employers may refuse to sign the forms. The individual's failure to obtain the signatures of designated employers, which have not refused to sign the forms, shall disqualify the individual for benefits until requalified. To requalify for benefits after disqualification under this subsection, the individual shall work in and be paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

a. (1) In determining whether or not any work is suitable for an individual, the department shall consider the degree of risk involved to the individual's health, safety, and morals, the individual's physical fitness, prior training, length of unemployment, and prospects for securing local work in the individual's customary occupation, the distance of the available work from the individual's residence, and any other factor which the department finds bears a reasonable relation to the purposes of this paragraph. Work is suitable if the work meets all the other criteria of this paragraph and if the gross weekly wages for the work equal or exceed the following percentages of the individual's average weekly wage for insured work paid to the individual during that quarter of the individual's base period in which the individual's wages were highest:

(a) One hundred percent, if the work is offered during the first five weeks of unemployment.

(b) Seventy-five percent, if the work is offered during the sixth through the twelfth week of unemployment.

(c) Seventy percent, if the work is offered during the thirteenth through the eighteenth week of unemployment.

(d) Sixty-five percent, if the work is offered after the eighteenth week of unemployment.

(2) However, the provisions of this paragraph shall not require an individual to accept employment below the federal minimum wage.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.24(4) provides:

**(4)** *Work refused when the claimant fails to meet the benefit eligibility conditions of Iowa Code section 96.4(3).* Before a disqualification for failure to accept work may be imposed, an individual must first satisfy the benefit eligibility conditions of being able to work and available for work and not unemployed for failing to bump a fellow employee with less seniority. If the facts indicate that the claimant was or is not available for work, and this resulted in the failure to accept work or apply for work, such claimant shall not be disqualified for refusal since the claimant is not available for work. In such a case it is the availability of the claimant that is to be tested. Lack of transportation, illness or health conditions, illness in family, and child care problems are generally considered to be good cause for refusing work or refusing to apply for work. However, the claimant's availability would be the issue to be determined in these types of cases.

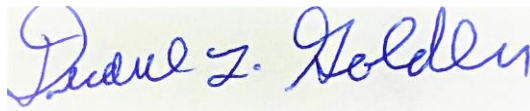
The offer may have been suitable, but the reason for the failure to accept the work was because claimant was not available for work. Therefore, the claimant is not disqualified from

receiving benefits, but is not eligible beginning on April 14, 2020. Benefits are withheld until such time as claimant makes herself available for work.

*Note to Claimant:* This decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits. If you disagree with this decision you may file an appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision. Individuals who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits due to disqualifying separations, but who are currently unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19 may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program.** Additional information on how to apply for PUA can be found at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>. If this decision becomes final, or if you are not eligible for PUA, you may have an overpayment of benefits.

**DECISION:**

The June 17, 2020, (reference 02) unemployment insurance decision is modified in favor of the appellant. Claimant declined an offer of work but was unavailable at the time. Benefits are withheld effective April 14, 2020, until such time as the claimant makes herself available for work.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Duane L. Golden". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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Duane L. Golden  
Administrative Law Judge

August 10, 2020  
Decision Dated and Mailed

dlg/sam