

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

FAITH A MCCOMBS
Claimant

APPEAL 15A-UI-09703-H2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

OC: 06/21/15
Claimant: Appellant (2)

Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Able and Available
871 IAC 24.2(1)e – Failure to Report
Iowa Code § 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant filed an appeal from the August 11, 2015, reference 04, decision that denied benefits because of a failure to report as directed. After due notice was issued, a telephone conference hearing was held on September 16, 2015. Claimant participated. Department's Exhibit D-1 was entered and received into the record.

ISSUE:

Did the claimant file a timely appeal?

The issue is whether failed to report to Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) as directed.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having heard the testimony and having examined the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: On July 29, 2015, a notice was mailed to the claimant requesting she provide information because for the week ending July 25, 2015 she indicated she was not able to and available for work. The claimant filed a weekly response claim and mistakenly pushed the button indicating she was not available for work.

The claimant did not receive the decision of August 11, 2015 denying her benefits. She filed her appeal as soon as she learned of the decision.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The first issue to be considered in this appeal is whether the claimant's appeal is timely. The administrative law judge determines it is.

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) provides:

2. Initial determination. A representative designated by the director shall promptly notify all interested parties to the claim of its filing, and the parties have ten days from the date

of mailing the notice of the filing of the claim by ordinary mail to the last known address to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of § 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to § 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving § 96.5, subsection 10, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to § 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving § 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". Unless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was mailed to the claimant's last known address, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding § 96.8, subsection 5.

The claimant did not have an opportunity to appeal the fact-finder's decision because the decision was not received. Without notice of a disqualification, no meaningful opportunity for appeal exists. See *Smith v. Iowa Employment Security Commission*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). Therefore, the appeal shall be accepted as timely.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant has established a good-cause reason for having failed to report as directed.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.2(1)e provides:

e. In order to maintain continuing eligibility for benefits during any continuous period of unemployment, an individual shall report as directed to do so by an authorized representative of the department. If the individual has moved to another locality, the individual may register and report in person at a workforce development center at the time previously specified for the reporting.

The method of reporting shall be weekly if a voice response continued claim is filed, unless otherwise directed by an authorized representative of the department. An individual who files a voice response continued claim will have the benefit payment automatically deposited weekly in the individual's financial institution's account or be paid by the mailing of a warrant on a biweekly basis.

In order for an individual to receive payment by direct deposit, the individual must provide the department with the appropriate bank routing code number and a checking or savings account number.

The department retains the ultimate authority to choose the method of reporting and payment.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.6 provides:

Profiling for reemployment services.

(1) The department of workforce development and the department of economic development will jointly provide a program which consists of profiling claimants and providing reemployment services.

(2) Profiling is a systematic procedure used to identify claimants who, because of certain characteristics, are determined to be permanently separated and most likely to exhaust benefits. Such claimants may be referred to reemployment services.

(3) Reemployment services may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. An assessment of the claimant's aptitude, work history and interest.
- b. Employment counseling regarding reemployment approaches and plans.
- c. Job search assistance and job placement services.
- d. Labor market information.
- e. Job search workshops or job clubs and referrals to employers.
- f. Résumé preparation.
- g. Other similar services.

(4) As part of the initial intake procedure, each claimant shall be required to provide the information necessary for profiling and evaluation of the likelihood of needing reemployment assistance.

(5) The referral of a claimant and the provision of reemployment services is subject to the availability of funding and limitations of the size of the classes.

(6) A claimant shall participate in reemployment services when referred by the department unless the claimant establishes justifiable cause for failure to participate or the claimant has previously completed such training or services. Failure by the claimant to participate without justifiable cause shall disqualify the claimant from the receipt of benefits until the claimant participates in the reemployment services.

- a. Justifiable cause for failure to participate is an important and significant reason which a reasonable person would consider adequate justification in view of the paramount importance of reemployment to the claimant.
- b. Reserved.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code § 96.4(7).

The claimant never received the inquiry letter from IWD. Non-receipt of the notice is a good-cause reason for a failure to report as directed. Benefits are allowed.

Iowa Code § 96.4(3) provides:

An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the department finds that:

3. The individual is able to work, is available for work, and is earnestly and actively seeking work. This subsection is waived if the individual is deemed partially unemployed, while employed at the individual's regular job, as defined in § 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "b", unnumbered paragraph 1, or temporarily unemployed as defined in § 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification requirement for failure to apply for, or to accept suitable work of § 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under § 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

The claimant mistakenly pushed the wrong button indicating she was not able to and available for work. She was able and available for work the week ending July 25, 2015 and thereafter.

DECISION:

The August 11, 2015, reference 04, decision is reversed. The claimant has not failed to report as directed. Benefits are allowed effective August 2, 2015.

Teresa K. Hillary
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

tkh/css