

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Section
1000 East Grand—Des Moines, Iowa 50319
DECISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
68-0157 (7-97) – 3091078 - EI

ERIC A HOLLARS
APT D
809 MAY CT
LECLAIRE IA 52753

EARLE M JORGENSEN COMPANY
c/o TALX UC EXPRESS
PO BOX 283
ST LOUIS MO 63166-0283

Appeal Number: 06A-UI-00077-LT
OC: 12-04-05 R: 04
Claimant: Respondent (1)

This Decision Shall Become Final, unless within fifteen (15) days from the date below, you or any interested party appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by submitting either a signed letter or a signed written Notice of Appeal, directly to the **Employment Appeal Board, 4th Floor—Lucas Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319**.

The appeal period will be extended to the next business day if the last day to appeal falls on a weekend or a legal holiday.

STATE CLEARLY

1. The name, address and social security number of the claimant.
2. A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken.
3. That an appeal from such decision is being made and such appeal is signed.
4. The grounds upon which such appeal is based.

YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in this appeal or you may obtain a lawyer or other interested party to do so provided there is no expense to Workforce Development. If you wish to be represented by a lawyer, you may obtain the services of either a private attorney or one whose services are paid for with public funds. It is important that you file your claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

(Administrative Law Judge)

(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Iowa Code § 96.5(2)a – Discharge/Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Employer filed a timely appeal from the December 30, 2005, reference 02, decision that allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on January 19, 2006. Claimant did participate. Employer did participate through Bill Jones.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant was employed as a full-time general warehouse worker through November 21, 2005, when he was discharged. A post-accident drug screen was administered on November 11, 2005. Patricia Dunbar, MRO, working through certified laboratory, KLS (Kroll Laboratory Specialists) notified claimant and employer of test results on November 21, and also in writing by certified mail, that claimant had tested positive for cocaine. Claimant availed himself of the split sample

test, which was also positive. Claimant called employer after the separation and raised the issue of the possibility that a false positive was created by the analgesic bupivacaine the treating physician injected four or five places into the wound area on November 11 before the drug screen was administered. Claimant received a drug screen policy on July 18, 2005.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason.

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.

This definition has been accepted by the Iowa Supreme Court as accurately reflecting the intent of the legislature. Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979).

The employer has the burden of proving disqualifying job misconduct. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982).

Iowa Code section 730.5(9) requires that a written drug screen policy be provided to every employee subject to testing. Iowa Code section 730.5(7)(i)(1) mandates that an employer, upon a confirmed positive drug or alcohol test by a certified laboratory, notify the employee of the test results by certified mail and the right to obtain a confirmatory test before taking disciplinary

action against an employee. Upon a positive drug screen, Iowa Code section 730.5(9)(g) requires, under certain circumstances, that an employer offer substance abuse evaluation and treatment to an employee the first time the employee has a positive drug test. The Iowa Supreme Court has held that an employer may not “benefit from an unauthorized drug test by relying on it as a basis to disqualify an employee from unemployment compensation benefits.” Eaton v. Iowa Employment Appeal Board, 602 N.W.2d 553, 557, 558 (Iowa 1999).

Although employer provided a written copy of the drug testing policy to the claimant, gave him notice of the test results according to the strict and explicit statutory requirements, and allowed him an opportunity for a split sample test, since the physician treating the finger wound administered bupivacaine, the root word ending for both bupivacaine and cocaine are caine, and the drug screen was administered after the analgesic, claimant’s rebuttal explanation for the positive test result is at least plausible. Since employer has not rebutted that evidence or explored further with the MRO and did not have the MRO available to answer questions about connectivity of the two drugs or false positive issues, it has failed to meet the burden of proof to establish job related misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

DECISION:

The December 30, 2005, reference 02, decision is affirmed. Claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason. Benefits are allowed, provided he is otherwise eligible.

dml/kjw