

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

**KAYI D MIVEDOR**

Claimant

**WEST LIBERTY FOODS LLC**

Employer

**APPEAL 16A-UI-10015-DG**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 08/21/16**

**Claimant: Appellant (1)**

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

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated September 12, 2016, (reference 01) that held claimant ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, an in person hearing was scheduled for and held on October 6, 2016 in Davenport, Iowa. Claimant participated personally and with the assistance of French interpreter Craig Roalson, and Renee Simmons, Advocate. Employer participated by Nicki Bruno, Human Resources Supervisor and was represented by Danny Cornell, Attorney at Law. Employer's Exhibits 1 through 5 and claimant's Exhibits A through D were admitted into evidence.

**ISSUE:**

Was the claimant discharged for disqualifying job-related misconduct?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant began working as a laundry room attendant on June 28, 2011. Claimant last worked for employer on August 22, 2016. Employer discharged claimant on August 25, 2016, because claimant violated employer's insubordination policy.

On or about August 19, 2016 claimant was asked to clean a supervisor's office. The supervisor had dropped a cup on the floor, and she was not able to get all the shards picked up off the floor with her hands. The supervisor asked claimant to come to her office as soon as possible to clean the area. Claimant explained that she did help clean assigned areas, but she was not assigned to clean that office. The supervisor worked the third shift, and claimant took her assignments from the second shift supervisor Patrick Frommelt. The third shift supervisor contacted Mr. Frommelt and explained the situation to him. Mr. Frommelt agreed that claimant should stop whatever she was doing at the time and clean up the second shift supervisor's office. Claimant was told that her supervisor Mr. Frommelt had been contacted and that he confirmed that she needed to clean the third shift supervisor's office. Claimant explained that she did not care who they called. She was not assigned to clean that area, and she was not going to do that work. Claimant was told at least three times that she must follow employer's

instructions and clean the third shift supervisor's office. Claimant refused to do the work, and someone else had to clean up the area later in the day.

Claimant had been warned about insubordination on previous occasions both verbally and in writing. She received written warnings for insubordination on March 6, 2015, and November 1, 2014. On March 6, 2015 claimant was uncooperative with requests from co-workers and staff. Claimant parked her vehicle in handicapped parking and she was told to move her vehicle. Claimant initially refused to move her vehicle, but later she did move it after being asked many times. Claimant was warned that her employment was in jeopardy at that time, and that her employment could be terminated if she did not follow instructions at work. Claimant refused to sign the written reprimands, and maintained that she had not done anything wrong.

### **REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment due to job-related misconduct.

Iowa Code § 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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.32(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 Dep't of Job Serv.*, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979).

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.32(4) provides:

(4) Report required. The claimant's statement and employer's statement must give detailed facts as to the specific reason for the claimant's discharge. Allegations of misconduct or dishonesty without additional evidence shall not be sufficient to result in disqualification. If the employer is unwilling to furnish available evidence to corroborate the allegation, misconduct cannot be established. In cases where a suspension or disciplinary layoff exists, the claimant is considered as discharged, and the issue of misconduct shall be resolved.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.32(8) provides:

(8) Past acts of misconduct. While past acts and warnings can be used to determine the magnitude of a current act of misconduct, a discharge for misconduct cannot be based on such past act or acts. The termination of employment must be based on a current act.

The gravity of the incident, number of policy violations and prior warnings are factors considered when analyzing misconduct. The lack of a current warning may detract from a finding of an intentional policy violation. The Iowa Supreme Court has opined that one unexcused absence is not misconduct even when it followed nine other excused absences and was in violation of a direct order. *Sallis v. EAB*, 437 N.W.2d 895 (Iowa 1989). *Higgins v. Iowa Department of Job Service*, 350 N.W.2d 187 (Iowa 1984), held that the absences must be both excessive and unexcused. The Iowa Supreme Court has held that the term "excessive" is more than one. Three incidents of tardiness or absenteeism after a warning has been held to be misconduct. *Clark v. Iowa Department of Job Service*, 317 N.W.2d 517 (Iowa Ct. App. 1982). While three is a reasonable interpretation of "excessive" based on current case law and Webster's Dictionary, the interpretation is best derived from the facts presented.

The Iowa Court of Appeals found substantial evidence of misconduct in testimony that the claimant worked slower than he was capable of working and would temporarily and briefly improve following oral reprimands. *Sellers v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 531 N.W.2d 645 (Iowa Ct. App. 1995). Generally, continued refusal to follow reasonable instructions constitutes misconduct. *Gilliam v. Atlantic Bottling Co.*, 453 N.W.2d 230 (Iowa Ct. App. 1990). Failure to sign a written reprimand acknowledging receipt constitutes job misconduct as a matter of law. *Green v Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 299 N.W.2d 651 (Iowa 1980). Misconduct must be "substantial" to warrant a denial of job insurance benefits. *Newman v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa Ct. App. 1984). When based on carelessness, the carelessness must actually indicate a "wrongful intent" to be disqualifying in nature. *Id.* Negligence does not constitute misconduct unless recurrent in nature; a single act is not disqualifying unless indicative of a deliberate disregard of the employer's interests. *Henry v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 391 N.W.2d 731 (Iowa Ct. App. 1986). Poor work performance is not misconduct in the absence of evidence of intent. *Miller v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 423 N.W.2d 211 (Iowa Ct. App. 1988).

It is the duty of the administrative law judge as the trier of fact in this case, to determine the credibility of witnesses, weigh the evidence and decide the facts in issue. *Arndt v. City of LeClaire*, 728 N.W.2d 389, 394-395 (Iowa 2007). The administrative law judge may believe all, part or none of any witness's testimony. *State v. Holtz*, 548 N.W.2d 162, 163 (Iowa App. 1996). In assessing the credibility of witnesses, the administrative law judge should consider the evidence using his or her own observations, common sense and experience. *Id.* In determining the facts, and deciding what testimony to believe, the fact finder may consider the following factors: whether the testimony is reasonable and consistent with other believable evidence; whether a witness has made inconsistent statements; the witness's appearance, conduct, age,

intelligence, memory and knowledge of the facts; and the witness's interest in the trial, their motive, candor, bias and prejudice. *Id.*

The employer has presented substantial and credible evidence that claimant violated employer's insubordination policy after having been warned. This is evidence of deliberate conduct in violation of company policy, procedure, or prior warning. Proof of a single incident of insubordination is sufficient to show a willful disregard for the employer's interest. Claimant's conduct does evince such willful or wanton disregard of 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. Benefits are denied.

**DECISION:**

The September 12, 2016, (reference 01) decision is affirmed. The claimant was discharged from employment due to job-related misconduct. Benefits are withheld until such time as she has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible.

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Duane L. Golden  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

dlg/rvs