

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

LISA M JENSEN

Claimant

APPEAL NO. 14A-UI-07085-DT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

CARE INITIATIVES

Employer

OC: 05/18/14

Claimant: Appellant (6)

Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision
871 IAC 26.14(7) – Dismissal of Appeal on Default
871 IAC 26.14(7) – Late Call

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

An appeal was filed from a representative's unemployment insurance decision dated June 25, 2014 (reference 03) that concluded Lisa M. Jensen (claimant/appellant) was not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits after a separation from employment from Care Initiatives (employer/respondent). Notices of hearing were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record for a telephone hearing to be held at 10:30 a.m. on August 4, 2014. A review of the Appeals Section's conference call system indicates that the claimant/appellant failed to respond to the hearing notice and provide a telephone number for the conference call system at which she could be reached for the hearing and did not participate in the hearing. The administrative law judge excused the employer and considered the record closed at 10:45 a.m. At 11:00 a.m., the claimant/appellant called the Appeals Section and requested that the record be reopened. Based on the appellant's failure to participate in the hearing and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law and decision.

ISSUES:

Should the hearing record be reopened?

Should the appeal be dismissed based on the claimant/appellant not participating in the hearing?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The claimant/appellant received the hearing notice prior to the August 4, 2014 hearing. The instructions inform the parties that if the party does not contact the Appeals Section and provide the phone number at which the party can be contacted for the hearing, the party will not be called for the hearing. The first time the claimant directly contacted the Appeals Section was on August 4, 2014, 30 minutes after the scheduled start time for the hearing. The claimant/appellant had failed to read and follow the information on the hearing notice, and had assumed that the Appeals Section would initiate the telephone contact even without a response to the hearing notice.

The representative's decision concluded that the claimant/appellant was not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The Iowa Administrative Procedure Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides in pertinent part:

If a party fails to appear or participate in a contested case proceeding after proper service of notice, the presiding officer may, if no adjournment is granted, enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party. If a decision is rendered against a party who failed to appear for the hearing and the presiding officer is timely requested by that party to vacate the decision for good cause, the time for initiating a further appeal is stayed pending a determination by the presiding officer to grant or deny the request. If adequate reasons are provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall vacate the decision and, after proper service of notice, conduct another evidentiary hearing. If adequate reasons are not provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall deny the motion to vacate.

Agency rule at 871 IAC 26.14(7) provides:

If a party has not responded to a notice of telephone hearing by providing the appeals bureau with the names and telephone numbers of the persons who are participating in the hearing by the scheduled starting time of the hearing or is not available at the telephone number provided, the presiding officer may proceed with the hearing. If the appealing party fails to provide a telephone number or is unavailable for the hearing, the presiding officer may decide the appealing party is in default and dismiss the appeal as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.12(3). The record may be reopened if the absent party makes a request to reopen the hearing under subrule 26.8(3) and shows good cause for reopening the hearing.

a. If an absent party responds to the hearing notice while the hearing is in progress, the presiding officer shall pause to admit the party, summarize the hearing to that point, administer the oath, and resume the hearing.

b. If a party responds to the notice of hearing after the record has been closed and any party which has participated is no longer on the telephone line, the presiding officer shall not take the evidence of the late party. Instead, the presiding officer shall inquire ex parte as to why the party was late in responding to the notice of hearing. For good cause shown, the presiding officer shall reopen the record and cause further notice of hearing to be issued to all parties of record. The record shall not be reopened if the presiding officer does not find good cause for the party's late response to the notice of hearing.

c. Failure to read or follow the instructions on the notice of hearing shall not constitute good cause for reopening the record.

[Emphasis added.]

The claimant/appellant appealed the representative's decision but failed to participate in the hearing. She did not establish good cause for her late response. The claimant/appellant has therefore defaulted on her appeal, pursuant to Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) and Rule 871 IAC 24.14(7), and the representative's decision remains in full force and effect.

If the claimant/appellant disagrees with this decision, she should appeal the decision directly to the Employment Appeal Board, whose address is listed on the cover page of this decision.

DECISION:

The representative's decision dated June 25, 2014 (reference 03) is affirmed. The decision denying benefits remains in effect.

Lynette A. F. Donner
Administrative Law Judge
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Iowa Workforce Development
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Decision Dated and Mailed

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