

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

SALLY MITCHELL

Claimant

APPEAL NO: 12A-UI-10457-BT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

UFP TECHNOLOGIES INC

Employer

OC: 07/29/12

Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.5-1-d - Voluntary Leaving/Illness or Injury
871 IAC 24.25(35) - Separation Due to Illness or Injury

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Sally Mitchell (claimant) appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated August 20, 2012, reference 01, which held that she was not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits because she voluntarily quit her employment with UFP Technologies, Inc. (employer) without good cause attributable to the employer. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on September 19, 2012. The claimant participated in the hearing. The employer participated through Stephanie Wiese, Office Administrator and Kevin Reilley. Based on the evidence, the arguments of the parties, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law, and decision.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant's voluntary separation from employment qualifies her to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was employed as a full-time packer from February 13, 2012 through February 17, 2012. She was subsequently taken off work by her physician after she fell at home and broke her arm. The claimant is still under non-work-related medical restrictions.

The employer placed the claimant on a medical leave of absence. The claimant maintained contact through April 2012 but did not respond to the employer's letter dated May 8, 2012. The employer terminated the claimant's employment effective June 8, 2012 after the claimant failed to contact the employer and/or provide updated medical documentation.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue to be determined is whether the reasons for the claimant's separation from employment qualify her to receive unemployment insurance benefits. The claimant is not

qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits if she voluntarily quit without good cause attributable to the employer. Iowa Code § 96.5-1. The claimant left her employment on February 17, 2012 due to a non-work related medical condition.

Iowa Code § 96.5-1-d provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

1. Voluntary quitting. If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual's employer, if so found by the department. But the individual shall not be disqualified if the department finds that:

d. The individual left employment because of illness, injury or pregnancy upon the advice of a licensed and practicing physician, and upon knowledge of the necessity for absence immediately notified the employer, or the employer consented to the absence, and after recovering from the illness, injury or pregnancy, when recovery was certified by a licensed and practicing physician, the individual returned to the employer and offered to perform services and the individual's regular work or comparable suitable work was not available, if so found by the department, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

871 IAC 24.25(35) provides:

Voluntary quit without good cause. In general, a voluntary quit means discontinuing the employment because the employee no longer desires to remain in the relationship of an employee with the employer from whom the employee has separated. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.5. However, the claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving Iowa Code § 96.5, subsection (1), paragraphs "a" through "i," and subsection 10. The following reasons for a voluntary quit shall be presumed to be without good cause attributable to the employer:

(35) The claimant left because of illness or injury which was not caused or aggravated by the employment or pregnancy and failed to:

- (a) Obtain the advice of a licensed and practicing physician;
- (b) Obtain certification of release for work from a licensed and practicing physician;
- (c) Return to the employer and offer services upon recovery and certification for work by a licensed and practicing physician; or
- (d) Fully recover so that the claimant could perform all of the duties of the job.

The claimant went on a medical leave of absence due to a non-work-related illness. She would only be eligible for benefits if her position were not available after her recovery. A "recovery" under Iowa Code § 96.5-1-d means a complete recovery without restriction. *White v. Employment Appeal Board*, 487 N.W.2d 342, 345 (Iowa 1992) (citing *Hedges v. Iowa Department of Job Service*, 368 N.W.2d 862, 867 (Iowa App. 1985)). The claimant has not been released to return to full work duties. Accordingly, the separation is without good cause attributable to the employer and benefits must be denied.

DECISION:

The unemployment insurance decision dated August 20, 2012, reference 01, is affirmed. The claimant voluntarily left work without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are withheld until she has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible.

Susan D. Ackerman
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

sda/css