

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

ROBERT JOHNSON
Claimant

ADVANCE SERVICES INC
Employer

APPEAL 21A-UI-13685-SN-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**OC: 03/14/21
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Iowa Code § 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct
Iowa Code § 96.5-1 - Voluntary Quit
Iowa Code § 96.5-1-j – Separation from Temporary Employer

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Robert Johnson (claimant) appealed a representative's March 25, 2021, decision (reference 02) that concluded he was not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits after his separation from work with Advance Services (employer). A hearing was conducted on July 28, 2021. Department's Exhibit D-1 and D-2 were received. The employer offered and Exhibit 1 was received into evidence. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative file.

ISSUES:

- Whether the claimant's appeal is timely? Whether it has reasonable grounds to be considered otherwise timely?
- Whether the claimant's separation is disqualifying?
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FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds:

A disqualification decision was mailed to claimant's last known address of record on May 25, 2021. The claimant did receive the decision on May 25, 2021. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by June 4, 2021. (Exhibit D-1) The appeal was not filed until June 7, 2021, which is after the date noticed on the disqualification decision. (Exhibit D-2)

The claimant excuses his delay in filing to his unfamiliarity with unemployment and his uncertainty about whether his appeal would be successful. He stated he needed help from his wife and Iowa Workforce Development personnel in making the decision. He specifically states

he thought the monetary record he received determined he was eligible, so he was uncertain if he had been disqualified or not.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The administrative law judge concludes the claimant's appeal was not timely and there are not reasonable grounds to consider it otherwise timely.

Iowa Code section 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 issuing the notice of the filing of the claim to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. All interested parties shall select a format as specified by the department to receive such notifications. 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 section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 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 section 96.5, subsections 10 and 11, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 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 issued, 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 section 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten calendar days for appeal begins running on the mailing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. *Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); *Johnson v. Board of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

The record in this case shows that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott*, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion.

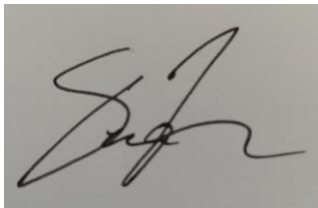
Hendren v. IESC, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. IESC*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973).

The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal. The claimant received the decision on May 25, 2021. While the administrative law judge is sympathetic to the claimant's unfamiliarity with unemployment, he notes that the claimant stands in the same position as the bulk of those who come before the court. If the claimant's unfamiliarity excused his filing delay, then the appeal period stated on the underlying decision would be meaningless. The administrative law judge does not find the claimant's confusion regarding his monetary record to be a circumstance either. The monetary record simply states whether the claimant has received sufficient insured wages to be monetarily eligible. To the extent these details were unclear, the administrative law judge encourages the claimant to read the Claimant Handbook.

The administrative law judge concludes that failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to 871 IAC 24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The March 25, 2021, decision (reference 02), decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect.



Sean M. Nelson
Administrative Law Judge
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau
1000 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209
Fax (515) 725-9067

August 4, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

smn/mh