

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

**MICHAEL L WRIGHT**  
Claimant

**HDS LTD**  
Employer

**APPEAL NO. 22A-UI-00790-B2-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 10/31/21  
Claimant: Respondent (1)**

Iowa Code § 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Protest

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer appealed the representative's decision dated November 23, 2021, reference 04, that concluded it failed to file a timely protest regarding the claimant's separation of employment on March 16, 2021, and no disqualification of unemployment insurance benefits was imposed. A hearing was scheduled and held on January 31, 2022, pursuant to due notice. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated by Michael Chamberlin.

**ISSUES:**

Whether the employer's protest is timely?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The administrative law judge, having considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant's notice of claim was mailed to the employer's address of record on November 2, 2021, and received by the employer within ten days. The notice of claim contains a warning that any protest must be postmarked or returned not later than ten days from the initial mailing date. The employer did not effect a protest until November 15, 2021, which is after the ten-day period had expired.

Employer read into the record a letter from the person employer placed in the position of handling unemployment claims and other administrative tasks. That employee was from Mauritania and had limited English skills. The employee could not properly fax in the protest, which employer stated was filled out in a timely manner. The employee then put the document in the outgoing mail box, not knowing that the mail in that box was infrequently picked up.

Employer states that although the protest was not timely postmarked, it was filled out in a timely manner, and at least put into the company's outgoing mail prior to the due date for being postmarked.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides, in pertinent part:

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 mailing the notice of the filing of the claim by ordinary mail to the last known address to protest payment of benefits to the claimant.

The ten calendar days for appeal begin 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).

Pursuant to rules Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.2(96)(1) and Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(96)(1), appeals are considered filed when postmarked, if mailed. *Messina v. IDJS*, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983).

A portion of the Iowa Code section dealing with timeliness of an appeal from a representative's decision states that such an appeal must be filed within ten days after notification of that decision was mailed. In addressing an issue of timeliness of an appeal under that portion of this Code section, the Iowa Supreme Court held that this statute prescribing the time for notice of appeal clearly limits the time to do so, and that compliance with the appeal notice provision is mandatory and jurisdictional. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979).

The administrative law judge considers the reasoning and holding of that court in that decision to be controlling on this portion of that same Iowa Code section which deals with a time limit in which to file a protest after notification of the filing of the claim has been mailed. The employer has not shown any good cause for not complying with the jurisdictional time limit. Therefore, the administrative law judge is without jurisdiction to entertain any protest regarding the separation from employment.

The administrative law judge concludes the employer failed to effect a timely protest within the time period prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law, and the delay was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the employer has failed to effect a timely protest 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 claimant's termination of employment. See *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979); *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979) and *Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company v. Employment Appeal Board*, 465 N.W.2d 674 (Iowa App. 1990).

**DECISION:**

The decision of the representative dated November 23, 2021, reference 04, is affirmed. The employer has failed to file a timely protest, and the decision of the representative shall stand and remain in full force and effect.



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Blair A. Bennett  
Administrative Law Judge

February 17, 2022

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Decision Dated and Mailed

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