

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

WILLIAM G HULTMAN

Claimant

PETERSON CONTRACTORS INC

Employer

APPEAL NO: 17A-UI-09628-JCT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 09/03/17

Claimant: Respondent (6)

Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) – Dismissal of Appeal on Default

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

An appeal was filed from an unemployment insurance decision dated September 13, 2017, (reference 01) that allowed benefits. Notice of the hearing was mailed to the parties' last known addresses of record for a telephone hearing to be held at 10:00 a.m. on October 5, 2017. A review of the Appeals Bureau's conference call system after 10:15 a.m. the same day shows the appellant registered a phone number with the Appeals Bureau to participate in the scheduled hearing, but failed to be available when called. Three calls were made to the registered phone number for Cindy Olson, but no one answered the call. There was no option to leave a voicemail. The administrative law judge extended a grace period to the employer to contact the Appeals Bureau, when it did not receive an anticipated call, the record was closed. No hearing was held.

ISSUE:

Should the appeal be dismissed based upon the appellant not being available to participate in the scheduled hearing?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The parties were properly notified of the scheduled hearing on this appeal. The appellant, Peterson Contractors Inc., failed to be available when called for the hearing, nor did it request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice.

The agency's decision concluded that the claimant was eligible for unemployment insurance benefits.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The Iowa Administrative Procedure Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides that if a party fails to appear or participate in a hearing after proper service of notice, the judge may enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party. The statute further states that if a party makes a timely request to vacate the decision and shows

good cause for failing to appear, the judge shall vacate the decision and conduct another hearing.

Agency rule Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) provides that if the appealing 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 judge may decide the appealing party is in default and dismiss the appeal as provided in Iowa Code § 17A.12(3). The record may be reopened if the absent party makes a request to reopen the hearing and shows good cause for reopening the hearing. The rule further states that *failure to read or follow the instructions on the notice of hearing is not good cause for reopening the record*. Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7)c. (Emphasis added.)

The appellant, Peterson Contractors Inc., appealed the unemployment insurance decision but failed to be available to participate in the scheduled hearing. The appellant has therefore defaulted on its appeal pursuant to Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) and Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.14(7), and the decision remains in force and effect.

If the appellant disagrees with this decision, a written request to reopen the record must be made to the administrative law judge within 15 days after the mailing date of this decision. The request should be mailed to the administrative law judge at the address listed at the end of this decision and must explain the emergency or other good cause that prevented the appellant from participating in the hearing at the scheduled time.

DECISION:

The appellant is in default and the appeal is dismissed. The unemployment insurance decision dated September 13, 2017, (reference 01) allowing benefits remains in effect.

Jennifer L. Beckman
Administrative Law Judge
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Iowa Workforce Development
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Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209
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Decision Dated and Mailed

jlb/scn