

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

DANEKEYIA NEWTON
Claimant

APPEAL NO: 11A-UI-01752-ET

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

JG RESTAURANTS INC
Employer

OC: 10-10-10
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge/Misconduct
Section 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Appeal
871 IAC 26.8(5) – Decision on the Record

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant/appellant filed an appeal from the January 14, 2011, reference 01, decision that denied benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was scheduled in Des Moines, Iowa, March 17, 2011, and continued by telephone conference call before Administrative Law Judge Julie Elder on April 12, 2011. The claimant arrived after the employer was allowed to leave March 17, 2011. The administrative law judge had asked the employer if he objected to a hearing solely regarding the timeliness of appeal issue proceeding without him if the claimant did eventually arrive during the hour as it was St. Patrick's Day and the parade made parking difficult and the employer agreed to that proposal. After testimony was taken about the timeliness of her appeal the administrative law judge reserved her ruling on the timeliness issue and the claimant agreed to complete the hearing by telephone conference call. The claimant provided a phone number prior to the hearing but that number was not operational at the time of the hearing and the claimant did not participate in the hearing or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice. Based on the appellant's failure to participate in the hearing, the available evidence in the administrative file 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 appeal is timely.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having considered all of the available evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: A disqualification decision was mailed to the claimant's last-known address of record on January 14, 2011. The claimant did not receive the decision. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by January 14, 2011. The appeal was not filed until February 14, 2011, which is after the date noticed on the disqualification decision. The claimant stated she moved in November 2010 but the fact-finding interview was held January 13, 2011, and that did not interfere with the claimant's ability to file a timely appeal. She realized her benefits stopped after she received her January 7, 2011,

benefit check but did not take any action to appeal the representative's decision until February 14, 2011, partially because she did not have transportation to Workforce. The administrative law judge reserved her ruling on the timeliness of the claimant's appeal and subsequently the parties were properly notified of the scheduled phone hearing on this appeal.

The administrative law judge has conducted a careful review of the available administrative file to determine whether the unemployment insurance decision should be affirmed.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

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 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 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, subsection 10, 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 mailed to the claimant's last known address, 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).

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

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 because she had approximately one month, which is 20 days longer than allowed, after realizing her benefits stopped to file an appeal or contact Workforce by phone or in person

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 section 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 January 14, 2011, reference 01, decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect. Benefits are withheld until such time as the claimant has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible.

Julie Elder
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

je/css