

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**RICHARD J COE**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 11A-UI-09014-AT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**STREAM INTERNATIONAL INC**  
Employer

**OC: 06/05/11**  
**Claimant: Respondent (2-R)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Stream International, Inc. filed a timely appeal from an unemployment insurance decision dated June 29, 2011, reference 01, that allowed benefits to Richard J. Coe. After due notice was issued, a telephone hearing was held August 2, 2011 with Mr. Coe participating. Human Resources Generalist Stacie Albert and Team Manager Erin Williams participated for the employer. Employer Exhibit One was admitted into evidence. The administrative law judge takes official notice of agency benefit payment records.

**ISSUE:**

Was the claimant discharged for misconduct in connection with his employment?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Richard J. Coe was employed as a customer support professional by Stream International, Inc. from July 19, 2010 until he was discharged June 7, 2011. On five separate occasions between June 2 and June 7, 2011, Mr. Coe failed to take calls from customers by placing his phone on mute or by placing customers on hold and then hanging up on the customers. He admitted this when confronted by Human Resources Generalist Stacie Albert and Team Manager Erin Williams. Mr. Coe had previously received three informal discussions concerning failing to take customer calls and he had received a prior warning for taking excessive breaks, a practice which also limited the number of calls that he would take.

Mr. Coe has received unemployment insurance benefits since filing a claim effective June 5, 2011.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

The question is whether the evidence in the record establishes that the claimant was discharged for misconduct in connection with his employment. It does.

Iowa Code § 96.5-2-a provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

2. Discharge for misconduct. If the department finds that the individual has been discharged for misconduct in connection with the individual's employment:

a. The individual shall be disqualified for benefits until the individual has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

871 IAC 24.32(1)a provides:

Discharge for misconduct.

(1) Definition.

a. "Misconduct" is defined as a deliberate act or omission by a worker which constitutes a material breach of the duties and obligations arising out of such worker's contract of employment. Misconduct as the term is used in the disqualification provision as being limited to conduct evincing such willful or wanton disregard of an employer's interest as is found in deliberate violation or disregard of standards of behavior which the employer has the right to expect of employees, or in carelessness or negligence of such degree of recurrence as to manifest equal culpability, wrongful intent or evil design, or to show an intentional and substantial disregard of the employer's interests or of the employee's duties and obligations to the employer. On the other hand mere inefficiency, unsatisfactory conduct, failure in good performance as the result of inability or incapacity, inadvertencies or ordinary negligence in isolated instances, or good faith errors in judgment or discretion are not to be deemed misconduct within the meaning of the statute.

The employer's testimony and documentary evidence establishes a pattern of deliberate failure to take phone calls by customers. The claimant's explanation is less persuasive than the employer's evidence. Benefits are withheld.

Iowa Code § 96.3-7, as amended in 2008, provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits.

a. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

b. (1) If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5. However, provided the benefits

were not received as the result of fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual, benefits shall not be recovered from an individual if the employer did not participate in the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to section 96.6, subsection 2, and an overpayment occurred because of a subsequent reversal on appeal regarding the issue of the individual's separation from employment. The employer shall not be charged with the benefits.

(2) An accounting firm, agent, unemployment insurance accounting firm, or other entity that represents an employer in unemployment claim matters and demonstrates a continuous pattern of failing to participate in the initial determinations to award benefits, as determined and defined by rule by the department, shall be denied permission by the department to represent any employers in unemployment insurance matters. This subparagraph does not apply to attorneys or counselors admitted to practice in the courts of this state pursuant to section 602.10101.

The question of whether the claimant must repay the benefits he has received is remanded to the Unemployment Insurance Services Division.

**DECISION:**

The unemployment insurance decision dated June 29, 2011, reference 01, is reversed. Benefits are withheld until the claimant has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times his weekly benefit amount, provided he is otherwise eligible. The question of repayment of benefits is remanded.

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Dan Anderson  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

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