

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

ALYSSA D SCHLOTMAN
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 10A-UI-16550-H2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

STREAM INTERNATIONAL INC
Employer

OC: 10-31-10
Claimant: Respondent (2R)

Iowa Code § 96.5(2)a – Discharge/Misconduct
Iowa Code § 96.3(7) – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from the November 24, 2010, reference 01, decision that allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on January 19, 2011. The claimant did participate and was represented by Dennis M. McElwain, Attorney at Law. The employer did participate through (representative) Staci Albert, Human Resources Generalist and James Hanson, Team Manager.

ISSUES:

Was the claimant discharged due to job-related misconduct?

Has the claimant been overpaid any unemployment insurance benefits?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as a customer support professional full time beginning January 11, 2010 through November 1, 2010 when she was discharged.

The claimant answered incoming telephone calls from customers who were calling to cancel their satellite radio services. As part of her training the claimant was required to make “save offers” to every caller who called in to cancel their service. The claimant had been trained on how to make the save offers and had in the past demonstrated an ability to correctly make the save offers. The employer routinely monitors calls of employees to insure that employees are correctly and accurately handling their job duties.

On October 31 the employer monitored a call the claimant took from a customer wanting to cancel their satellite radio service. The claimant did not make any save offers to the customer during the call as she had been trained to do. The claimant had also been overheard on June 10, 20 and July 15 failing to make save offers to customers. In late August 2010 the claimant was moved into a special training program called the “backstage pass” to give her additional training on making at least two save offers to every customer who called in to cancel

their service. On September 15, 29 and October 25 the claimant demonstrated the ability to make at least two save offers to customers during monitored calls.

When the claimant was hired she was not guaranteed that she would get to pick and chose which type of calls she would answer. The claimant never provided any doctors notes to indicate she needed any special accommodation because she suffered from attention deficit disorder. Just five days prior to her failed call, the claimant demonstrated the ability to make save offers to customers when she chose to do so.

The claimant had been previously disciplined on July 15, September 2 and October 21 for intentionally disconnecting calls and repeatedly failing to make save offers. She had been warned that her own actions were placing her job in jeopardy.

The claimant has received unemployment benefits after the separation on a claim with an effective date of November 24, 2010.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment due to job-related misconduct.

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 Iowa Court of Appeals found substantial evidence of misconduct in testimony that the claimant worked slower than he was capable of working and would temporarily and briefly improve following oral reprimands. *Sellers v. EAB*, 531 N.W.2d 645 (Iowa App. 1995). Generally, continued refusal to follow reasonable instructions constitutes misconduct. *Gilliam v. Atlantic Bottling Company*, 453 N.W.2d 230 (Iowa App. 1990). The claimant had demonstrated an ability from July through September 2010 to make save offers to customers when she so chose despite being off of her ADD medication. The claimant knew that her job was in jeopardy if she failed to make save offers. Claimant's repeated failure to adequately and fully perform her job duties after having established the ability to do so is evidence of willful job-related misconduct. Benefits are denied.

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.

Because the claimant's separation was disqualifying, benefits were paid to which the claimant was not entitled. The unemployment insurance law provides that benefits must be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later determined to be ineligible for benefits, even though the claimant acted in good faith and was not otherwise at fault. However, the overpayment will not be recovered when it is based on a reversal on appeal of an initial determination to award benefits on an issue regarding the claimant's employment separation if: (1) the benefits were not received due to any fraud or willful misrepresentation by the claimant and (2) the employer did not participate in the initial proceeding to award benefits. The employer will not be charged for benefits whether or not the overpayment is recovered. Iowa

Code § 96.3(7). In this case, the claimant has received benefits but was not eligible for those benefits.

DECISION:

The November 24, 2010 (reference 01) decision is reversed. The claimant was discharged from employment due to job-related misconduct. Benefits are withheld until such time as she has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible.

REMAND: The matter of determining the amount of the potential overpayment and whether the overpayment should be recovered under Iowa Code § 96.3(7)b is remanded to the Agency.

Teresa K. Hillary
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

tkh/css