

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

KENNETH R MEADER
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 12A-UI-02176-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

CRST VAN EXPEDITED INC
Employer

OC: 01/22/12
Claimant: Appellant (2)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Kenneth Meader (claimant) appealed a representative's February 29, 2012 decision (reference 01) that concluded he was not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because he was discharged from work with CRST Van Expedited (employer) for excessive unexcused absenteeism and tardiness after having been warned. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for March 20, 2012. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Angie Stastny, Director of Human Resources; Matthew Schwarz, Director of Operations – After Hours; and Lucas Casper, Operations Manager - Weekends.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant was separated from employment for any disqualifying reason.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on October 11, 2010, as a full-time weekend fleet manager. The claimant signed for receipt of the employer's handbook. The employer issued the claimant a verbal warning on March 28, 2011, for the claimant's absence on March 26, 2011, due to water in his basement. On November 7, 2011, the employer issued the claimant a written warning for leaving work without authorization on November 5, 2011. The claimant left for an early lunch break to take care of a personal issue. The employer had always allowed the claimant and others to take an early break for these sorts of situations in the past. On January 22, 2012, the employer issued the claimant a final written warning for his absence on January 21, 2012, after having been in a car accident. The employer notified the claimant that further infractions could result in termination from employment.

On January 23, 2012, the claimant asked to talk to the director of operations about the warning. The director of operations instructed the claimant to leave work and go find proof that the claimant was absent due to the car accident. The claimant left work to do so. The employer terminated the claimant on January 24, 2012, for leaving work in the middle of his shift on January 23, 2012.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was not discharged for misconduct.

Iowa Code section 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 has the burden of proof in establishing disqualifying job misconduct. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). Misconduct serious enough to warrant discharge is not necessarily serious enough to warrant a denial of job insurance benefits. Such misconduct must be "substantial." Newman v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa App. 1984). The employer did not provide sufficient evidence of job-related misconduct. The employer told the claimant to leave and the claimant followed the employer's instructions. The employer did not meet its burden of proof to show misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

DECISION:

The representative's February 29, 2012 decision (reference 01) is reversed. The employer has not met its proof to establish job-related misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/css