

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

JODY L CASTOR

Claimant

APPEAL NO. 10A-UI-06507-HT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

TRINITY REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Employer

OC: 03/07/10

Claimant: Appellant (1)

Section 96.5(7) – Vacation Pay

Section 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant, Jody Castor, filed an appeal from a decision dated March 22, 2010, reference 01. The decision disqualified her from receiving unemployment benefits due to the receipt of vacation pay. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call on June 21, 2010. The claimant participated on her own behalf. The employer, Trinity Regional Medical Center (TRMC), participated by Human Resources Manager Ted Vaughn. Exhibit D-1 was admitted into the record.

The claimant had elected to use a cell phone and was advised it was not recommended. She was notified if she lost the connection during the hearing the administrative law judge would not call back until she contacted the Appeals Section to indicate the cell phone was working again or to provide another phone to use, but the hearing would proceed without her participation and might very well be over by the time she called back. Ms. Castor lost the connection at 11:15 a.m. By the time the record was closed at 11:17 a.m. she had not contacted the Appeals Section to rejoin the hearing and the record was closed.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the appeal is timely.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

A disqualification decision was mailed to the claimant's last-known address of record on March 22, 2010. The claimant received the decision. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by April 1, 2010. The appeal was not filed until April 29, 2010, which is after the date noticed on the decision.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.6-2 provides in pertinent part:

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. . . . 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.

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).

(1) The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal.

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated March 22, 2010, reference 01, is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect. The claimant is ineligible for unemployment benefits.

Bonny G. Hendricksmeier
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bgh/pjs