

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Section
1000 East Grand—Des Moines, Iowa 50319
DECISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
68-0157 (7-97) – 3091078 - EI

FRANCIS FUNKE
103 E GREENWOOD
BANCROFT IA 50517

WINNEBAGO INDUSTRIES
PO BOX 152
FOREST CITY IA 50436-0152

Appeal Number: 05A-UI-11970-BT
OC: 11/06/05 R: 02
Claimant: Respondent (2)

This Decision Shall Become Final, unless within fifteen (15) days from the date below, you or any interested party appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by submitting either a signed letter or a signed written Notice of Appeal, directly to the **Employment Appeal Board, 4th Floor—Lucas Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319**.

The appeal period will be extended to the next business day if the last day to appeal falls on a weekend or a legal holiday.

STATE CLEARLY

1. The name, address and social security number of the claimant.
2. A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken.
3. That an appeal from such decision is being made and such appeal is signed.
4. The grounds upon which such appeal is based.

YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in this appeal or you may obtain a lawyer or other interested party to do so provided there is no expense to Workforce Development. If you wish to be represented by a lawyer, you may obtain the services of either a private attorney or one whose services are paid for with public funds. It is important that you file your claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

(Administrative Law Judge)

(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96 5-2-a - Discharge for Misconduct
Section 96.3-7 - Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Winnebago Industries (employer) appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated November 21, 2005, reference 01, which held that Francis Funke (claimant) was eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on December 12, 2005. The claimant participated in the hearing. The employer participated through Lorna Zrostlik, Personnel Recruiter, and Barry Bendickson, Security Manager.

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 employed as a full-time assembler from February 12, 1976 through October 17, 2005. He was discharged for theft of company property. The discharge resulted from a second offense of theft since the claimant had been suspended for the same violation once before. On April 25, 1990, he purchased some zippers and was found to possess more zippers than he purchased. On October 13, 2005, the claimant purchased five yards of two different fabrics for approximately \$30.00. When he was leaving through Gate 2 at approximately 3:30 p.m., the security officers stopped him and checked out his purchases, which is standard procedure. The claimant had one large roll of fabric instead of two and the security officer took the claimant to the security office where the fabric was laid out and measured. The claimant had ten and one half yards of fabric instead of only the five he purchased. He denied the theft and stated he could not help it if more fabric was cut for him. The employer investigated the matter further and could not find any employee who cut the fabric for the claimant. The claimant said he did not remember who did it but these are people with whom he works everyday. He sent another employee to pay for the fabric and told that person he got five yards of fabric.

The claimant filed a claim for unemployment insurance benefits effective November 6, 2005 and has received benefits after the separation from employment in the amount of \$1,685.00.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the employer discharged the claimant for work-connected misconduct. A claimant is not qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits if an employer has discharged the claimant for reasons constituting work-connected misconduct. Iowa Code § 96.5-2-a.

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.

This definition has been accepted by the Iowa Supreme Court as accurately reflecting the intent of the legislature. Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979).

The employer has the burden to prove the claimant was discharged for work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). The claimant was discharged for theft of company property. He denies liability and claims he was not aware that he had more fabric than he purchased. However, the claimant upholsters furniture for a part-time business or hobby and should have easily been aware of how much fabric he was carrying. Furthermore, this was his second offense of a similar nature. The claimant's violation of a known work rule was a willful and material breach of the duties and obligations to the employer and a substantial disregard of the standards of behavior the employer had the right to expect of the claimant. Work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law has been established in this case and benefits are denied.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7 provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits. 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.

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.

Because the claimant's separation was disqualifying, benefits were paid to which the claimant was not entitled. Those benefits must be recovered in accordance with the provisions of Iowa law.

DECISION:

The unemployment insurance decision dated November 21, 2005, reference 01, is reversed. The claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because he was discharged from work for misconduct. Benefits are withheld until he has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times his weekly benefit amount, provided he is otherwise eligible. The claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$1,685.00.

sdb/tjc