

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

HOLLIE BATES
Claimant

APPEAL NO: 13A-UI-02877-ST

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

A TO Z DRYING INC
Employer

OC: 02/03/13
Claimant: Respondent (2-R)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge
871 IAC 24.32(7) – Excessive Unexcused Absenteeism
Section 96.3-7 – Recovery of Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer appealed a department decision dated February 27, 2013, reference 01, that held the claimant was not discharged for misconduct on January 31, 2013, and benefits are allowed. A telephone hearing was held on April 8, 2013. The claimant did not participate. Mark Jensen, HR Manager; Kathy Mayer, Accountant; and Marlene Penfold, HR Supervisor, participated for the employer. Employer Exhibit 1 was received as evidence.

ISSUES:

Whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct in connection with employment.

Whether claimant is overpaid UI benefits.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge having heard the witness testimony and having considered the evidence in the record, finds: The claimant began employment on February 23, 2007, and last worked for the employer as a full-time packaging assistant on January 31, 2013. She received the employer attendance policies in an employee handbook that provide an employee must call and report an absence prior to the start of a work shift.

The employer issued claimant an attendance notice on July 10, 2012 for absenteeism, and a written warning for the same reason on August 9. The employer terminated claimant for continuing attendance issue from September 26 through January 30, 2013.

Claimant is scheduled to report for work at 5:45 a.m. Her daughter called the employer to ask about her claimant-mother at 6:45 a.m. on January 28. Claimant did call in at 7:02 a.m. to report an absence due to illness that day. She proceeded to make late calls to report absences on January 29 & 30 that is a violation of the attendance policy.

Prior to termination she was questioned about the late reports. She stated she had a fever but she did not provide any medical statement she had seen a doctor.

Claimant failed to respond to the hearing notice. She has been receiving UI benefits on her claim.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

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 administrative law judge concludes employer has established claimant was discharged for misconduct in connection with employment on January 31, 2013 for excessive unexcused absenteeism.

The employer had warned claimant about her absenteeism (also includes tardiness) problem. She failed to timely report absences for three consecutive days that is a violation of policy and it constitutes job disqualifying misconduct in light of the prior warning. The employer received no excusable reason from claimant why she failed to timely report her absences.

Iowa Code section 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.

Since claimant has been disqualified in this matter, the overpayment issue is remanded to Claims for a decision.

DECISION:

The department decision dated February 27, 2013, reference 01, is reversed. The claimant was discharged for misconduct on January 31, 2013. Benefits are denied until the claimant

requalifies by working in and being paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible. The overpayment issue is remanded.

Randy L. Stephenson
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

rls/tll