

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

GARY BERRY
Claimant

APPEAL NO: 12A-UI-08088-BT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

MATRIX METALS LLC
Employer

OC: 06/10/12
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.5(2)(a) - Discharge for Misconduct
871 IAC 26.14(7) - Late Call
Iowa Code § 17A.12-3 - Non-Appearance of Party
871 IAC 26.8(5) - Decision on the Record

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Gary Berry (claimant) appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated June 29, 2012, reference 01, which held that he was not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits because he was discharged from Matrix Metals, LLC (employer) for work-related misconduct. Notices of hearing were sent to both parties' last-known addresses of record for a telephone hearing to be held at 8:00 a.m. on September 11, 2012. The appellant did not participate in the hearing. The administrative law judge considered the record closed at 8:10 a.m. At 8:25 a.m., the claimant called the Appeals Section and requested that the record be reopened. Based on the appellant's failure to participate in the hearing, the administrative file, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law and decision.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the unemployment insurance decision should be affirmed.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant received the hearing notice prior to the September 11, 2012 hearing. The instructions inform the parties that if the party does not contact the Appeals Section and provide the phone number at which the party can be contacted for the hearing, the party will not be called for the hearing. The first time the claimant directly contacted the Appeals Section was on September 11, 2012, 25 minutes after the scheduled start time for the hearing. The claimant stated that he faxed in his telephone number but also assumed he did not need to call in since Iowa Workforce already had his telephone number.

The administrative law judge has conducted a careful review of the administrative file to determine whether the unemployment insurance decision should be affirmed.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The Iowa Administrative Procedures Act § 17A.12-3 provides in pertinent part:

If a party fails to appear or participate in a contested case proceeding after proper service of notice, the presiding officer may, if no adjournment is granted, enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party. If a decision is rendered against a party who failed to appear for the hearing and the presiding officer is timely requested by that party to vacate the decision for good cause, the time for initiating a further appeal is stayed pending a determination by the presiding officer to grant or deny the request. If adequate reasons are provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall vacate the decision and, after proper service of notice, conduct another evidentiary hearing. If adequate reasons are not provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall deny the motion to vacate.

871 IAC 26.14(7) provides:

(7) If a party has not responded to a notice of telephone hearing by providing the appeals section with the names and telephone numbers of its witnesses by the scheduled time of the hearing, the presiding officer may proceed with the hearing.

a. If an absent party responds to the hearing notice while the hearing is in progress, the presiding officer shall pause to admit the party, summarize the hearing to that point, administer the oath, and resume the hearing.

b. If a party responds to the notice of hearing after the record has been closed and any party which has participated is no longer on the telephone line, the presiding officer shall not take the evidence of the late party. Instead, the presiding officer shall inquire as to why the party was late in responding to the notice of hearing. For good cause shown, the presiding officer shall reopen the record and cause further notice of hearing to be issued to all parties of record. The record shall not be reopened if the presiding officer does not find good cause for the party's late response to the notice of hearing.

c. Failure to read or follow the instructions on the notice of hearing shall not constitute good cause for reopening the record.

At issue is a request to reopen the record made after the record was considered closed. The request to reopen the record is denied because the party making the request failed to participate by not being available at the telephone number provided.

The administrative law judge has carefully reviewed evidence in the record and concludes that the unemployment insurance decision previously entered in this case is correct and should be affirmed. 871 IAC 25.8(5). If the appellant does not present any evidence at the appeal hearing, the administrative law judge has no grounds in law or fact to reverse the initial decision.

DECISION:

The unemployment insurance decision dated June 29, 2012, reference 01, is affirmed. The decision disqualifying the claimant from receiving benefits remains in effect.

Susan D. Ackerman
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

sda/css