

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

MARY F MORRIS
1135½ AVE H
FORT MADISON IA 52627-4543

CIGARETTE OUTLET
1735 AVE H
FORT MADISON IA 52627

Appeal Number: 06A-UI-03976-S2T
OC: 01/22/06 R: 04
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 96.5-3-a – Failure to Accept Suitable Work

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Cigarette Outlet (employer) appealed a representative's March 28, 2006 decision (reference 05) that concluded Mary Morris (claimant) eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on April 27, 2006. The claimant did not provide a telephone number where she could be reached and, therefore, did not participate. The employer participated by Debra Schnyder, Supervisor. The employer offered one exhibit which was marked for identification as Exhibit One. Exhibit One was received into evidence.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The claimant filed a new claim for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of January 22, 2006. The claimant's average weekly wage during her highest quarter of wages was \$265.87.

On approximately February 23, 2006, the employer mailed the claimant a registered letter with a job offer. The claimant was offered a job which met the claimant's medical restrictions for her non-work related injury. The job paid \$300.00 per week. The claimant was qualified to perform the work and had worked approximately the same hours in the past. The claimant signed for receipt of the letter on March 4, 2006, but did not respond to the letter.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the claimant failed to accept an offer of suitable work. For the following reasons the administrative law judge concludes she did.

Iowa Code section 96.5-3-a provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

3. Failure to accept work. If the department finds that an individual has failed, without good cause, either to apply for available, suitable work when directed by the department or to accept suitable work when offered that individual. The department shall, if possible, furnish the individual with the names of employers which are seeking employees. The individual shall apply to and obtain the signatures of the employers designated by the department on forms provided by the department. However, the employers may refuse to sign the forms. The individual's failure to obtain the signatures of designated employers, which have not refused to sign the forms, shall disqualify the individual for benefits until requalified. To requalify for benefits after disqualification under this subsection, the individual shall work in and be paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

a. In determining whether or not any work is suitable for an individual, the department shall consider the degree of risk involved to the individual's health, safety, and morals, the individual's physical fitness, prior training, length of unemployment, and prospects for securing local work in the individual's customary occupation, the distance of the available work from the individual's residence, and any other factor which the department finds bears a reasonable relation to the purposes of this paragraph. Work is suitable if the work meets all the other criteria of this paragraph and if the gross weekly wages for the work equal or exceed the following percentages of the individual's average weekly wage for insured work paid to the individual during that quarter of the individual's base period in which the individual's wages were highest:

(1) One hundred percent, if the work is offered during the first five weeks of unemployment.

(2) Seventy-five percent, if the work is offered during the sixth through the twelfth week of unemployment.

(3) Seventy percent, if the work is offered during the thirteenth through the eighteenth week of unemployment.

(4) Sixty-five percent, if the work is offered after the eighteenth week of unemployment.

However, the provisions of this paragraph shall not require an individual to accept employment below the federal minimum wage.

The work was offered within six weeks of the claimant's unemployment and was required to provide the claimant wages 75 percent of those paid to the claimant during the highest quarter of her base period. The evidence establishes that the claimant would have received at least 75 percent of her average weekly wages during her high quarter of earnings. Based on the factors found in Iowa Code section 96.5-3-a, the work offered to the claimant was suitable work. The claimant is disqualified from receiving unemployment insurance benefits.

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.

The claimant has received benefits since filing her claim herein. Pursuant to this decision, benefits of \$344.00 now constitute an overpayment which must be repaid. That overpaid was addressed in an administrative law judge's decision dated March 20, 2006, reference 03.

DECISION:

The unemployment insurance decision dated March 28, 2006 (reference 05) is reversed. The claimant is not qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits. The claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$344.00. That overpaid was addressed in an administrative law judge's decision dated March 20, 2006, reference 03.

bas/tjc