

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

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Appeal Number: 06A-UI-00273-SWT
OC: 12/04/05 R: 12
Claimant: Respondent (1)

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

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated December 29, 2006, reference 01, that concluded the claimant's discharge was not for work-connected misconduct. A telephone hearing was held on January 24, 2006. The parties were properly notified about the hearing. The claimant participated in the hearing. Julie Millard participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer with a witness, Jordon Lashmett.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The claimant worked full time for the employer as a forklift operator from July 29, 2002 to November 23, 2005. The claimant was informed and understood that under the employer's work rules, employees were not allowed to leave work before the end of their shift without permission from a supervisor. The claimant had received discipline for a safety violation on

July 11, 2005, for changing a forklift battery by himself. He had also been disciplined in the past for excessive absences and misuse of email.

On November 22, 2005, the claimant's starting time was 6:00 a.m. There was no exact ending time; instead the claimant would leave work some time after the forklift driver on the second shift reported for duty. Therefore, the claimant's ending time would vary and he was not required to check out with his supervisor before leaving.

The second shift forklift driver reported to work at 2:45 p.m. The claimant finished his work for the day and left work at about 3:16 p.m. When he left, he believed he had completed his work for the day and that the second shift driver was there to take over. He did not check with a supervisor because he did not believe he was leaving work early. When he left, he spoke to the supervisor on duty and said "Good night. I'll see you tomorrow." The supervisor did not require the claimant to stay longer.

On November 23, 2005, the employer discharged the claimant for leaving work early without permission the day before.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue in this case is whether the claimant was discharged for work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance 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.

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 propriety of a discharge is not at issue in an unemployment insurance case. An employer may be justified in discharging an employee, but the employee's conduct may not amount to misconduct precluding the payment of unemployment compensation. The law limits disqualifying misconduct to substantial and willful wrongdoing or repeated carelessness or negligence that equals willful misconduct in culpability. Lee v. Employment Appeal Board, 616 N.W.2d 661, 665 (Iowa 2000).

No willful or substantial misconduct has been proven in this case. The claimant believed that he had completed his work for the day and that the forklift operator on the second shift was there to take over. The claimant denied the employer's assertion that he had told the second shift forklift operator that he did not care, after the second shift worker had told him that he was not able to relieve him at that time. The claimant's testimony was credible.

DECISION:

The unemployment insurance decision dated December 29, 2006, reference 01, is affirmed. The claimant is qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits, if he is otherwise eligible.

saw/kjf