

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS AND APPEALS
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS DIVISION, UI APPEALS BUREAU**

MICHAEL J SCHWERING
Claimant

APPEAL 23A-UI-01251-S2-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**OC: 03/15/20
Claimant: Appellant (6)**

PL116-136, Sec. 2104(f)(2) – Overpayment of Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation
Iowa Code § 96.16(4) – Offenses and Misrepresentation
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-25.1 – Misrepresentation & Fraud
Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal
Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) – Dismissal of Appeal on Default

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant Michael J. Schwering filed an appeal from the January 20, 2023 (reference 06) unemployment insurance decision that determined the claimant was overpaid Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) benefits because he failed to accurately report earnings while concurrently filing weekly claims for unemployment insurance benefits. Proper notice of hearing was mailed to the appellant's last known address of record for a telephone hearing scheduled for February 22, 2023, at 9:10 a.m. There were five appeal numbers set for a consolidated hearing: 23A-UI-01249-S2-T, 23A-UI-01250-S2-T, 23A-UI-01251-S2-T, 23A-UI-01252-S2-T and 23A-UI-01253-S2-T. Investigator Anjelita Sills-Campos appeared on behalf of Iowa Workforce Development (IWD). A review of the Appeals Bureau's conference call system indicates that the claimant/appellant failed to call the toll-free number listed on the hearing notice at the time of the hearing. No hearing was held.

ISSUE:

Whether the appeal should be dismissed based on the appellant's failure to appear and participate.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The claimant is the appellant in this matter and in four companion appeal numbers. The appellant was properly notified of the scheduled hearing for this appeal. The appellant failed to call the toll-free number listed on the hearing notice at the time of the hearing. The appellant did not participate or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice. The administrative law judge noted on the recorded line that the notice for the hearing was mailed to the last-known address of record for the claimant/appellant at least ten days in advance as required by law.

The hearing notice instruction specifically advises parties of the date and time of hearing. It also states:

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

YOU MUST CALL the toll-free number: ... at the time of the hearing. You may call up to 5 minutes before the hearing. You are not the organizer – Do NOT press 2.

The administrative law judge **WILL NOT** call you for the hearing, you **MUST** call into the number provided above to participate. **Failure to participate in the hearing may result in the dismissal of your appeal.**

The back page of the hearing notice provides further hearing instructions stating, “You must call the toll-free number on the front of this notice at the time of the hearing to participate.” This information also appears on the hearing notice in Spanish.

As a courtesy to the appellant the record was left open for a minimum of 15 minutes after the hearing start time to give the appellant a reasonable opportunity to participate. Holding the appellant in default for failure to appear and participate during a 15-minute window after the hearing start time is reasonable considering the time allocated for unemployment hearings.

The representative’s decision concluded that claimant was overpaid \$9,000.00 in FPUC benefits for fifteen weeks between March 29, 2020, and July 25, 2020, because he failed to report wages earned with C & S Products Co. Inc. The decision indicated a 15 percent penalty would be added due to misrepresentation.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The Iowa Administrative Procedure Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides that if a party fails to appear or participate in a hearing after proper service of notice, the judge may enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party.

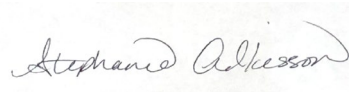
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) provides, in pertinent part:

(7) If a party has not responded to a notice of telephone hearing by providing the appeals bureau with the names and telephone numbers of the persons who are participating in the hearing by the scheduled starting time of the hearing or is not available at the telephone number provided, the presiding officer may proceed with the hearing. If the appealing party fails to provide a telephone number or is unavailable for the hearing, the presiding officer may decide the appealing party is in default and dismiss the appeal as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.12(3).

In this case, the appellant did not call the toll-free number listed on the hearing notice at the time of the hearing. The appellant is in default. The appeal should be dismissed. The representative’s decision remains in force and effect.

DECISION:

The January 20, 2023 (reference 06) unemployment insurance decision finding claimant was overpaid FPUC benefits remains in effect as the appellant is in default and the appeal is dismissed.



Stephanie Adkisson
Administrative Law Judge

February 24, 2023
Decision Dated and Mailed

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APPEAL RIGHTS. If you disagree with the decision, you or any interested party may:

1. Appeal to the Employment Appeal Board within fifteen (15) days of the date under the judge's signature by submitting a written appeal via mail, fax, or online to:

**Employment Appeal Board
4th Floor – Lucas Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Fax: (515)281-7191
Online: eab.iowa.gov**

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.

AN APPEAL TO THE BOARD SHALL 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.

An Employment Appeal Board decision is final agency action. If a party disagrees with the Employment Appeal Board decision, they may then file a petition for judicial review in district court.

2. If no one files an appeal of the judge's decision with the Employment Appeal Board within fifteen (15) days, the decision becomes final agency action, and you have the option to file a petition for judicial review in District Court within thirty (30) days after the decision becomes final. Additional information on how to file a petition can be found at Iowa Code §17A.19, which is online at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf> or by contacting the District Court Clerk of Court <https://www.iowacourts.gov/iowa-courts/court-directory/>.

Note to Parties: YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in the appeal or 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.

Note to Claimant: It is important that you file your weekly claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

SERVICE INFORMATION:

A true and correct copy of this decision was mailed to each of the parties listed.

DERECHOS DE APELACIÓN. Si no está de acuerdo con la decisión, usted o cualquier parte interesada puede:

1. Apelar a la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo dentro de los quince (15) días de la fecha bajo la firma del juez presentando una apelación por escrito por correo, fax o en línea a:

**Employment Appeal Board
4th Floor – Lucas Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319
Fax: (515)281-7191
En línea: eab.iowa.gov**

El período de apelación se extenderá hasta el siguiente día hábil si el último día para apelar cae en fin de semana o día feriado legal.

UNA APELACIÓN A LA JUNTA DEBE ESTABLECER CLARAMENTE:

- 1) El nombre, dirección y número de seguro social del reclamante.
- 2) Una referencia a la decisión de la que se toma la apelación.
- 3) Que se interponga recurso de apelación contra tal decisión y se firme dicho recurso.
- 4) Los fundamentos en que se funda dicho recurso.

Una decisión de la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo es una acción final de la agencia. Si una de las partes no está de acuerdo con la decisión de la Junta de Apelación de Empleo, puede presentar una petición de revisión judicial en el tribunal de distrito.

2. Si nadie presenta una apelación de la decisión del juez ante la Junta de Apelaciones Laborales dentro de los quince (15) días, la decisión se convierte en acción final de la agencia y usted tiene la opción de presentar una petición de revisión judicial en el Tribunal de Distrito dentro de los treinta (30) días después de que la decisión adquiera firmeza. Puede encontrar información adicional sobre cómo presentar una petición en el Código de Iowa §17A.19, que se encuentra en línea en <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf> o comunicándose con el Tribunal de Distrito Secretario del tribunal <https://www.iowacourts.gov/iowa-courts/court-directory/>.

Nota para las partes: USTED PUEDE REPRESENTARSE en la apelación u obtener un abogado u otra parte interesada para que lo haga, siempre que no haya gastos para Workforce Development. Si desea ser representado por un abogado, puede obtener los servicios de un abogado privado o uno cuyos servicios se paguen con fondos públicos.

Nota para el reclamante: es importante que presente su reclamo semanal según las instrucciones, mientras esta apelación está pendiente, para proteger su derecho continuo a los beneficios.

SERVICIO DE INFORMACIÓN:

Se envió por correo una copia fiel y correcta de esta decisión a cada una de las partes enumeradas.