

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

CATRINA J NESS
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 21A-UI-23780-B2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**HEARTLAND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
LLC**
Employer

OC: 09/27/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Appeal
Iowa Code § 96.5-1 – Voluntary Quit
Iowa Code § 96.4-3 – Able and Available

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant filed an appeal from the January 6, 2021, reference 04, decision that denied benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on December 16, 2021. The claimant did participate. Employer failed to respond to the hearing notice and did not participate.

ISSUES:

Whether the appeal is timely?
Whether claimant quit for good cause attributable to employer?
Whether claimant is able and available for work?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: A decision was mailed to the claimant's last known address of record on January 6, 2021. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by January 16, 2021. The appeal was not filed until October 21, 2021, which is after the date noticed on the disqualification decision. Claimant stated that she did receive the decision, but felt that she would be better served by filing for PUA rather than filing an appeal in this matter. It was only when claimant received a letter notifying her of a decision that she'd been overpaid benefits that claimant decided to appeal.

Claimant went on an extended leave of absence from employer as she was pregnant and had young children for whom she was caring. Claimant was called back to work in October, and instead of returning, chose to quit her job as she was pregnant, and was still caring for young children.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides, in pertinent part:

The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. . . . Unless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was mailed to the claimant's last known address, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision.

The ten calendar days for appeal begin running on the mailing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. *Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); *Johnson v. Board of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

Pursuant to rules Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.2(96)(1) and Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(96)(1), appeals are considered filed when postmarked, if mailed. *Messina v. IDJS*, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983).

The record in this case shows that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott*, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. IESC*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. IESC*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The record shows that the appellant did not have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal.

The administrative law judge concludes that failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code Section 96.6-2, and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See, *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The January 6, 2021, reference 04, decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect.



Blair A. Bennett
Administrative Law Judge

January 20, 2022
Decision Dated and Mailed

bab/mh