

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

CURTIS M KASS

Claimant

APPEAL 22A-UI-00317-JC-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**JOHN DEERE CONSTRUCTION
EQUIPMENT**

Employer

OC: 10/10/21

Claimant: Appellant (4)

Iowa Code § 96.5(4) – Labor Disputes
Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Able to and Available for Work
Iowa Code § 96.1A(37) – Total, Partial, Temporary Unemployment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant/appellant, Curtis M. Kass, appealed the November 23, 2021 (Reference 01) initial decision which denied benefits, concluding claimant was ineligible for benefits between October 14, 2021 and November 20, 2021 due to a labor dispute. After proper notice, a telephone hearing was held on January 25, 2022. The claimant/appellant, Curtis M. Kass, participated personally. The employer/respondent, John Deere Construction Equipment, did not participate. Official notice was taken of the administrative record. Based on the evidence, the arguments presented, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law, and decision.

ISSUES:

Is the claimant disqualified from benefits due to a labor dispute?
Was the claimant able to and available for work effective October 10, 2021- October 23, 2021?
Was the claimant totally, partially, or temporarily unemployed effective October 10, 2021- October 23, 2021?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant established his claim for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of October 10, 2021. Claimant filed claims for unemployment insurance benefits for the period of October 10, 2021 and October 23, 2021.

Claimant began work for employer on February 20, 2012. Claimant works for employer as a full-time laser operator. Claimant works in the Dubuque Works plant in Department 154. Claimant performed work in this position until October 8, 2021. Claimant did not perform work October 9, 2021 through October 13, 2021 due to a lack of work at John Deere. On October 14, 2021, a labor dispute was initiated by employees concerning the terms and conditions of their employment.

Claimant is a union member. He was able and available for work during the labor dispute. He was directly participating in, financing, or interested in the labor dispute which caused the stoppage of work. Claimant worked on the picket line as assigned by the union during the labor dispute.

In addition, claimant does belong to a class of workers which were employed at the premises where the stoppage occurred immediately before the commencement of the stoppage and who were participating in, financing, or directly interested in the dispute. Following the labor dispute, employees in claimant's position received favorable changes in the conditions of their employment, including an increase in pay, retirement benefits, and ratification bonus.

Claimant returned to work on November 19, 2021 after the labor dispute ended. He is still employed by employer.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons set forth below, the administrative law judge modifies the initial decision in favor of the claimant/appellant. The administrative law judge concludes the claimant was laid off due to a lack of work but otherwise able and available for work during the week of October 10-16, 2021. Benefits are allowed for this week. The claimant is ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits for the period of October 17, 2021 through October 23, 2021 due to a labor dispute.

Iowa Code section 96.1A(37) provides:

"Total and partial unemployment".

a. An individual shall be deemed "*totally unemployed*" in any week with respect to which no wages are payable to the individual and during which the individual performs no services.

b. An individual shall be deemed partially unemployed in any week in which either of the following apply:

(1) While employed at the individual's then regular job, the individual works less than the regular full-time week and in which the individual earns less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

(2) The individual, having been separated from the individual's regular job, earns at odd jobs less than the individual's weekly benefit amount plus fifteen dollars.

c. An individual shall be deemed temporarily unemployed if for a period, verified by the department, not to exceed four consecutive weeks, the individual is unemployed due to a plant shutdown, vacation, inventory, lack of work or emergency from the individual's regular job or trade in which the individual worked full-time and will again work full-time, if the individual's employment, although temporarily suspended, has not been terminated.

Iowa Code section 96.4(3) provides:

An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the department finds that:

3. The individual is able to work, is available for work, and is earnestly and actively seeking work. This subsection is waived if the individual is deemed partially unemployed, while employed at the individual's regular job, as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "b", unnumbered paragraph (1), or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification requirement for failure to apply for, or to accept suitable work of section 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

Iowa Code section 96.5(4) provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits, regardless of the source of the individual's wage credits:

4. Labor disputes.

a. For any week with respect to which the department finds that the individual's total or partial unemployment is due to a stoppage of work which exists because of a labor dispute at the factory, establishment, or other premises at which the individual is or was last employed, provided that this subsection shall not apply if it is shown to the satisfaction of the department that:

1. The individual is not participating in or financing or directly interested in the labor dispute which caused the stoppage of work; and

2. The individual does not belong to a grade or class of workers of which, immediately before the commencement of the stoppage, there were members employed at the premises at which the stoppage occurs, any of whom are participating in or financing or directly interested in the dispute.

b. Provided, that if in any case separate branches of work which are commonly conducted as separate businesses in separate premises are conducted in separate departments of the same premises, each such department shall, for the purposes of this subsection, be deemed to be a separate factory, establishment, or other premises.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.33(1) provides:

As used in sections 96.5(3) "b"(1) and 96.5(4), the term labor dispute shall mean any controversy concerning terms, tenure, or conditions of employment, or concerning the association or representation of persons in negotiating, fixing, maintaining, changing, or seeking to arrange terms or conditions of employment regardless of whether the disputants stand in the proximate relation of employer and employee. An individual shall be disqualified for benefits if unemployment is due to a labor dispute.

For the period of October 10-16, 2021:

For an unemployed individual to be eligible to receive benefits, he must be able to work, available for work, and actively seeking work as required by the unemployment insurance law. Iowa Code § 96.4(3). The burden is on the claimant to establish that he is able and available for work within the meaning of the statute. Iowa Code § 96.6(2); Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22.

For the week beginning October 10, 2021, the undisputed evidence is the claimant was able to and available for work but did not perform work October 11, 12, and 13 due to a lack of work. Claimant was able to work for the majority of the work week, prior to the labor dispute that began on October 14, 2021. Therefore, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant is eligible for benefits for the week ending October 16, 2021, provided claimant meets all other requirements.

Effective October 17, 2021:

A claimant is disqualified from unemployment insurance benefits during a work stoppage caused by a labor dispute. A work stoppage due to a labor dispute must be the cause of unemployment to result in the striking worker's disqualification from receiving unemployment benefits. *Titan Tire Corp. v. Employment Appeal Bd.*, 641 N.W.2d 752 (Iowa 2002). A claimant is not disqualified from benefits during such a period if the claimant is not financing, participating in, or directly interested in the labor dispute personally **AND** does not belong to a class of workers who are financing, participating in, or directly interested in the labor dispute.

The labor dispute at issue here concerned the terms and conditions of the employment of the class of workers claimant belongs to. As noted above, following the labor dispute employees in claimant's position - including claimant - received favorable changes in the conditions of their employment, including an increase in pay and benefits. The claimant also personally participated in the labor strike, as a union member and working the picketing line as assigned.

Based on the evidence presented, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant's unemployment beginning the week of October 17, 2021 was due to a work stoppage caused by a labor dispute, and that he does not meet the eligibility requirements outlined above, in order to be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits during the labor dispute.

Claimant is therefore disqualified from benefits during the labor dispute and unemployment insurance benefits are denied.

DECISION:

The decision dated November 23, 2021 (reference 01) that denied unemployment insurance benefits is modified In favor of the claimant/appellant. For the week of October 10-16, 2021, claimant was able and available for work, but laid off due to a lack of work. Benefits are allowed, provided claimant is otherwise eligible. Claimant is disqualified from unemployment insurance benefits from October 17, 2021 through October 23, 2021 due to a labor dispute.



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February 14, 2022
Decision Dated and Mailed

jlb/mh