

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

JENNIFER M MELOHN
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 21A-UI-08180-B2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

CROSSMARK INC
Employer

OC: 01/03/21
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 March 17, 2021, reference 01, decision that denied benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on May 28, 2021. The claimant did participate. The employer did participate through Teresa Hicks. Employer's Exhibits 1-6 were admitted to the record.

ISSUES:

Whether the appeal is timely?

Whether claimant quit for good cause attributable to employer?

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 March 9, 2021. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by March 19, 2021. The appeal was not filed until March 22, 2021, which is after the date noticed on the disqualification decision. Claimant stated that she didn't think anything of this letter as she'd received a previous letter allowing her benefits. She did not open this letter for a period of time as she didn't think that it would be important as she had all other matters concerning her unemployment worked out.

Claimant worked as a full time supervisor for employer. Claimant's last day of work was December 11, 2020. After that date, she was committed to the hospital. She stayed there for 4 days. After her release, employer attempted multiple times to be in touch with claimant but claimant was not returning the emails sent although she was at home and accessing her email. Claimant was deemed to have abandoned her job on December 18, 2020.

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 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 May 28, 2021, reference 01, 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

June 11, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

bab/mh