

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

LISA LYLES
Claimant

APPEAL 17A-UCFE-00050-JCT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**OC: 06/05/16
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal
Iowa Code § 96.3(7) – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated July 19, 2017, (reference 04) that concluded she was overpaid \$1,012.00 in unemployment insurance benefits. A telephone hearing was held on December 18, 2017. Proper notice of the hearing was given to the claimant. The claimant participated in the hearing. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative records including the fact-finding documents. Department Exhibit D-1 was admitted into evidence. 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 appeal timely?
Has the claimant been overpaid any unemployment insurance benefits?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The claimant filed a new claim for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of June 4, 2017. The claimant filed for and received a total of \$1,012.00 in unemployment insurance benefits for the weeks between June 4, 2017 and June 17, 2017. The unemployment insurance decision that disqualified the claimant from receiving unemployment insurance benefits has been affirmed in a decision of the administrative law judge in appeal 17A-UCFE-00031-JP-T.

An initial unemployment insurance decision regarding an overpayment of benefits was mailed to the claimant's last known address of record on July 19, 2017. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by July 29, 2017. Because July 29, 2017 was a Saturday, the final day to appeal was extended to July 31, 2017. The appeal was not filed until November 29, 2017, which is after the date noticed on the unemployment insurance decision (Department Exhibit D-1).

The address of record provided to IWD is where the claimant's mother-in-law resides. The claimant has periodically used the address while in transition or moving with her husband, who is currently deployed. The claimant is unsure when her mother-in-law checked the mail or if the letter was received. The claimant believed she was sent a screenshot of a letter sometime from her, but doesn't know when because she got a new phone.

However, on September 21, 2017, the claimant received a follow up letter from IWD regarding making a payment arrangement for the overpayment. The claimant read and understood the letter but forgot about it while she and her family acclimated to their new home and learned of her husband's deployment. When the claimant found the letter again, she then appealed on November 29, 2017 (Department Exhibit D-1).

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow the administrative law judge concludes the claimant's appeal is untimely.

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides:

2. Initial determination. A representative designated by the director shall promptly notify all interested parties to the claim of its filing, and the parties have ten days from the date of mailing the notice of the filing of the claim by ordinary mail to the last known address to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. 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. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsections 10 and 11, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". 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. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten calendar days for appeal begins 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. Bd. of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

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 unemployment insurance 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. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 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. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 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. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 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 claimant became aware of the initial decision regarding the overpayment when she received a letter dated September 21, 2017 that indicated she must make payment arrangements. The claimant waited over two more months after the notice to inquire about or file an appeal (Department Exhibit D-1).

The administrative law judge is sympathetic to the claimant, but based on the evidence presented, concludes that the claimant's failure to file a timely appeal was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service, which under 871 IAC 24.35(2) would excuse the delay in filing the appeal. The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. *Beardslee v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The July 19, 2017, (reference 04) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect.

Jennifer L. Beckman
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

jlb/scn