

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Section
1000 East Grand—Des Moines, Iowa 50319
DECISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
68-0157 (7-97) – 3091078 - EI

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TYSON FRESH MEATS INC
c/o FRICK, UC EXPRESS
P O BOX 283
ST LOUIS MO 63166-0283

Appeal Number: 04A-UI-09116-SWT
OC 07/18/04 R 03
Claimant: Respondent (1)

This Decision Shall Become Final, unless within fifteen (15) days from the date below, you or any interested party appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by submitting either a signed letter or a signed written Notice of Appeal, directly to the **Employment Appeal Board, 4th Floor—Lucas Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.**

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.

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.

YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in this appeal or you may 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. It is important that you file your claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

(Administrative Law Judge)

(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96.5-2-a - Discharge

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated August 16, 2004, reference 02, that concluded the claimant's discharge was not for work-connected misconduct. A telephone hearing was held on September 16, 2004. The parties were properly notified about the hearing. The claimant participated in the hearing. Dave Duncan participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The claimant worked full time for the employer as an hourly production worker from September 30, 2003, to July 20, 2004. The claimant was pregnant. She became sick at work on July 19 and was sent home by the company nurse. The claimant saw her doctor and was excused from working on July 19. Her doctor released her to return on July 20 if her symptoms improved.

The claimant was late for work on July 20 with notice to the employer because she still was not feeling well. After working for about two hours, the claimant felt nauseous. While on her break, she called her doctor's office and explained how she felt. The nurse told her that she should leave work if she was sick. She then asked the nurse whether she could leave work. The nurse said she would have to get permission from her supervisor to leave. Her supervisor would not give the claimant permission to leave work and told her that she should get a leave of absence because she was missing too much time because of her pregnancy. He then said that she had received three attendance points for reporting late for work that day and would be fired the next day because she had exceeded the point limit on the employer's absenteeism policy. The claimant understood that she had been fired.

The claimant was sick the next two days. She came in to the plant on July 23 to turn in her company property. The human resources director informed her that she had been terminated on July 21, 2004.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue in this case is whether the claimant was discharged for work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law.

Iowa Code Section 96.5-2-a provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

2. Discharge for misconduct. If the department finds that the individual has been discharged for misconduct in connection with the individual's employment:

a. The individual shall be disqualified for benefits until the individual has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the individual's weekly benefit amount, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

871 IAC 24.32(1)a provides:

Discharge for misconduct.

(1) Definition.

a. "Misconduct" is defined as a deliberate act or omission by a worker which constitutes a material breach of the duties and obligations arising out of such worker's contract of employment. Misconduct as the term is used in the disqualification provision as being limited to conduct evincing such willful or wanton disregard of an employer's interest as is found in deliberate violation or disregard of standards of behavior which the employer has the right to expect of employees, or in carelessness or negligence of such degree of recurrence as to manifest equal culpability, wrongful intent or evil design, or to show an intentional and substantial disregard of the employer's interests or of the employee's duties and obligations to the employer. On the other hand mere inefficiency, unsatisfactory conduct, failure in good performance as the result of inability or incapacity, inadvertencies or ordinary negligence in isolated instances, or good faith

errors in judgment or discretion are not to be deemed misconduct within the meaning of the statute.

This definition has been accepted by the Iowa Supreme Court as accurately reflecting the intent of the legislature. Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979).

The employer has the burden to prove the claimant was discharged for work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). The propriety of a discharge is not at issue in an unemployment insurance case. An employer may be justified in discharging an employee, but the employee's conduct may not amount to misconduct precluding the payment of unemployment compensation. The law limits disqualifying misconduct to substantial and willful wrongdoing or repeated carelessness or negligence that equals willful misconduct in culpability. Lee v. Employment Appeal Board, 616 N.W.2d 661, 665 (Iowa 2000).

The findings of fact show how I resolved the disputed factual issues in this case by carefully assessing of the credibility of the witnesses and reliability of the evidence and by applying the proper standard and burden of proof. While the employer may have been justified in discharging the claimant, work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law has not been established in this case. The claimant was late and absent due to medical problems. She reasonably believed that she was fired on July 20, when her supervisor informed her that she had exceeded the point limit on the employer's attendance policy. She did not quit her employment.

DECISION:

The unemployment insurance decision dated August 16, 2004, reference 02, is affirmed. The claimant is qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits, if she is otherwise eligible.

saw/s