

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

68-0157 (9-06) - 3091078 - EI

JODI A MCLEOD

Claimant

APPEAL NO. 11A-UI-12787-LT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

ABM JANITORIAL SERVICES NORTH

Employer

OC: 08/28/11

Claimant: Respondent (2-R)

Iowa Code § 96.5(1) – Voluntary Leaving

Iowa Code § 96.3(7) – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed an appeal from the September 20, 2011 (reference 01) decision that allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call on October 20, 2011. Claimant participated. Employer participated through Night Shift Supervisor Carl Shadden and District Manager Karen McDowell and was represented by Sandra Linsin of Employer's Edge.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether claimant voluntarily left the employment with good cause attributable to the employer and whether she is overpaid benefits as a result.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant was employed full-time as a janitor from April 26, 2005 and was separated from employment on June 8, 2011. Two employees complained to Shadden the week before that claimant spent an extraordinary amount of time during the restroom during her shift. The procedure when cleaning the restroom required that the door be propped open. He found her in the women's restroom three times that week when she was supposed to have been cleaning the men's restroom, where her cleaning supplies were. On her last day of work, at about 8:30 p.m., he waited for her under those circumstances for ten minutes before calling her. She said, "I was peeing. This is bullshit. I'm not putting up with this," went to the storage closet for some personal items, and left. She had just had a 15-minute break at 7 p.m. Claimant thought Shadden was harassing her by singling her out and reported this to McDowell, who reviewed the complaint and found other write-ups about other employees. She had not addressed complaints to McDowell before then but also told her she was in the restroom because of her menstrual cycle that week. When McDowell told her that she had no other place or shift for claimant to work, she quit. Continued work was available.

Claimant has received unemployment benefits since filing a claim with an effective date of August 28, 2011.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes claimant voluntarily left the employment without good cause attributable to the employer.

Iowa Code § 96.5-1 provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

1. Voluntary quitting. If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual's employer, if so found by the department.

871 IAC 24.25(22), (27), and (28) provide:

Voluntary quit without good cause. In general, a voluntary quit means discontinuing the employment because the employee no longer desires to remain in the relationship of an employee with the employer from whom the employee has separated. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.5. However, the claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving Iowa Code § 96.5, subsection (1), paragraphs "a" through "i," and subsection 10. The following reasons for a voluntary quit shall be presumed to be without good cause attributable to the employer:

(22) The claimant left because of a personality conflict with the supervisor.

(27) The claimant left rather than perform the assigned work as instructed.

(28) The claimant left after being reprimanded.

Claimant has the burden of proving that the voluntary leaving was for good cause attributable to the employer. Iowa Code § 96.6(2). Given that the complaints about claimant taking long or unauthorized breaks covered more than a week, her claim that she was taking that long because of her menstrual cycle is not credible. The claimant's decision to quit because of Shadden confronting her and reprimanding her about long or unauthorized break times was not for good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are denied.

Iowa Code § 96.3-7, as amended in 2008, provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits.

a. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

b. (1) If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5. However, provided the benefits

were not received as the result of fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual, benefits shall not be recovered from an individual if the employer did not participate in the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to section 96.6, subsection 2, and an overpayment occurred because of a subsequent reversal on appeal regarding the issue of the individual's separation from employment. The employer shall not be charged with the benefits.

(2) An accounting firm, agent, unemployment insurance accounting firm, or other entity that represents an employer in unemployment claim matters and demonstrates a continuous pattern of failing to participate in the initial determinations to award benefits, as determined and defined by rule by the department, shall be denied permission by the department to represent any employers in unemployment insurance matters. This subparagraph does not apply to attorneys or counselors admitted to practice in the courts of this state pursuant to section 602.10101.

Because claimant's separation was disqualifying, benefits were paid to which claimant was not entitled. The unemployment insurance law provides that benefits must be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later determined to be ineligible for benefits, even though the claimant acted in good faith and was not otherwise at fault. However, the overpayment may not be recovered when it is based on a reversal on appeal of an initial determination to award benefits on an issue regarding the claimant's employment separation if: (1) the benefits were not received due to any fraud or willful misrepresentation by the claimant and (2) the employer did not participate in the initial proceeding to award benefits. If so, the employer will not be charged for benefits whether or not the overpayment is recovered. Iowa Code § 96.3(7). In this case, the claimant has received benefits but was not eligible for those benefits.

DECISION:

The September 20, 2011 (reference 01) decision is reversed. Claimant voluntarily left the employment without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are withheld until such time as she has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times her weekly benefit amount, provided she is otherwise eligible.

REMAND:

The matter of determining the amount of the potential overpayment and whether the overpayment should be recovered under Iowa Code § 96.3(7)b is remanded to the Agency.

Dévon M. Lewis
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

dml/kjw