

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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QWEST CORPORATION  
c/o EMPLOYERS UNITY INC  
PO BOX 749000  
ARVADA CO 80006-9000

Appeal Number: 06A-UI-04495-H2T  
OC: 07-31-05 R: 02  
Claimant: Respondent (2)

**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.

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(Administrative Law Judge)

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(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge/Misconduct  
871 IAC 24.32(7) – Excessive Unexcused Absenteeism  
Section 96.3-7 – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from the April 21, 2006, reference 06, decision that allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on May 11, 2006. The claimant did participate along with her witness Don Dawson. The employer did participate through Dan Dare, Sales and Service Supervisor and was represented by Marcy Schneider of Employers Unity. Employer's Exhibit One was received.

#### FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as a consumer sales and service associate full time beginning September 12, 2005 through March 28, 2006, when she was discharged.

On March 25, 2006, the claimant called in to work and indicated that she could not be at work because she had to attend a wedding and was currently in the state of Texas. Prior to leaving Iowa to attend the out of state wedding, the claimant had requested vacation for both March 24, and March 25. The claimant had been granted vacation for March 24, 2006, but had been denied March 25, 2006, as a vacation day. The claimant was instructed that if she called in promptly at 7:00 a.m. on the morning of March 25, she might be able to secure one of the priority personal days (PPD) that were available. The claimant called in at 7:05 a.m. and was too late to secure one of the two open priority personal days available.

The claimant was discharged from employment due to a final incident of absenteeism that occurred on March 25, 2006, when she called in to be absent from work so she could attend a friend of her daughters' wedding. The claimant was last warned on January 24, 2006, that she faced termination from employment upon another incident of unexcused absenteeism. The claimant knew that she would not be allowed to be gone on March 25, 2006, yet chose to be gone anyway. The claimant was told she could ask for priority personal days but also knew there was no approval or guarantee that she would be granted one of the two open slots. The employer was not obligated to grant either a request for vacation or for a priority personal day.

The claimant has claimed and received unemployment insurance benefits after the separation from employment.

#### REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment due to job-related misconduct.

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(7) provides:

(7) Excessive unexcused absenteeism. Excessive unexcused absenteeism is an intentional disregard of the duty owed by the claimant to the employer and shall be considered misconduct except for illness or other reasonable grounds for which the employee was absent and that were properly reported to the employer.

The determination of whether unexcused absenteeism is excessive necessarily requires consideration of past acts and warnings. The term "absenteeism" also encompasses conduct that is more accurately referred to as "tardiness." An absence is an extended tardiness, and an incident of tardiness is a limited absence. Absences related to issues of personal responsibility such as transportation, lack of childcare, and oversleeping are not considered excused. Higgins v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 350 N.W.2d 187 (Iowa 1984).

The employer has established that the claimant was warned that further unexcused absences could result in termination of employment and the final absence was not excused. The final absence, in combination with the claimant's history of absenteeism, is considered excessive. Benefits are withheld.

Iowa Code section 96.3-7 provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits. 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.

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.

Because the claimant's separation was disqualifying, benefits were paid to which the claimant was not entitled. Those benefits must be recovered in accordance with the provisions of Iowa law.

#### DECISION:

The April 21, 2006, reference 06, decision is reversed. The claimant was discharged from employment due to excessive, unexcused absenteeism. 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. The claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$740.00.

tkh/kkf