

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**MICHELLE R HARRIS**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 13A-UI-07575-H2T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**NORDSTROM INC**  
Employer

**OC: 06/02/13**  
**Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Iowa Code § 96.5(2)a – Discharge/Misconduct  
871 IAC 24.32(7) – Excessive Unexcused Absenteeism

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The claimant filed an appeal from the June 21, 2013, (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits. After due notice was issued a hearing was held on August 1, 2013. Claimant participated. Employer did not participate.

**ISSUE:**

Was the claimant discharged due to job connected misconduct?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant was employed full-time as a customer service specialist beginning on November 12, 2012 through May 31, 2013 when she was discharged. The claimant was let go for poor attendance. The claimant last missed work on May 30, 2013 when her van broke down. The claimant had received the employer's attendance policy which put her notice that when she reached eight attendance points she would be discharged. The claimant missed work because of transportation problems and because of child care issues.

**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).

An employer is entitled to expect its employees to report to work as scheduled or to be notified as to when and why the employee is unable to report to work. The evidence established that the claimant was given the policy and knew or should have known 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 unexcused absenteeism, is considered excessive. Benefits are withheld.

#### **DECISION:**

The June 21, 2013 (reference 01) decision is affirmed. 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.

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Teresa K. Hillary  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

tkh/pjs