

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

KEVIN L JOHNSON
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 16A-UI-06358-JTT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**IOWA WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

**OC: 12/20/15
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Iowa Code Section 96.4(3) – Able & Available
871 IAC 24.2(1)(e) – Failure to Report as Directed
Iowa Code Section 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Kevin Johnson filed an appeal from the May 16, 2016, reference 10, decision that denied benefits effective May 8, 2016, based on an agency conclusion that he had failed to report as directed in response to a Letter of Inquiry and, therefore, could not be deemed available for work. . After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on July 11, 2016. Mr. Johnson participated. The hearing in this was consolidated with the hearing in Appeal Numbers 16A-UI-06357-JTT, 16A-UI-06360-JTT, and 16A-UI-06359-JTT. Exhibits A through D were received into evidence.

ISSUE:

Whether the appeal from the May 16, 2016, reference 10, decision was timely. Whether there is good cause to treat the appeal as timely.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: On May 16, 2016, Iowa Workforce Development mailed two decisions to Kevin Johnson at his last-known address of record. One decision was the May 16, 2016, reference 09, decision that denied benefits for the week that ended April 9, 2016, based on an agency conclusion that Mr. Johnson had failed to make an adequate work search after an earlier warning about his work search. The second decision was the May 16, 2016, reference 10, decision that denied benefits effective May 8, 2016, based on an agency conclusion that Mr. Johnson had failed to report as directed in response to an Unemployment Insurance Letter of Inquiry. Both decisions stated that an appeal from the decision must be postmarked by May 26, 2016 or received by the Appeals Section by that date. Mr. Johnson received both decisions the same day, on or about May 18, 2016. Mr. Johnson did not take any steps to appeal from the decisions until June 7, 2016. On that day, Mr. Johnson went to a local Workforce Development Center, completed an appeal form, and delivered the completed appeal form the Workforce Development Center staff. The Workforce Development Center staff faxed the appeal to the Appeals Bureau. The Appeals Bureau received the appeal on June 7, 2016.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code § 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, subsection 10, 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-day deadline for appeal begins to run on the date Workforce Development mails the decision to the parties. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the Agency 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. Board of Adjustment, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

An appeal submitted by mail is deemed filed on the date it is mailed as shown by the postmark or in the absence of a postmark the postage meter mark of the envelope in which it was received, or if not postmarked or postage meter marked or if the mark is illegible, on the date entered on the document as the date of completion. See 871 AC 24.35(1)(a). See also Messina v. IDJS, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983). An appeal submitted by any other means is deemed filed on the date it is received by the Unemployment Insurance Division of Iowa Workforce Development. See 871 IAC 24.35(1)(b).

Mr. Johnson's appeal from the reference 09 and the reference 10 decisions was filed on June 7, 2016, when he delivered his completed appeal to the Workforce Development Center staff and the Appeals Bureau received the appeal.

The evidence in the record establishes 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 representatives' 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. IDJS, 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. IDJS, 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. IESC, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); Smith v. IESC, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973).

The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal from the reference 09 and the reference 10 decisions that were mailed to him on May 16, 2016. Mr. Johnson received the decisions in a timely manner, but elected to wait until June 7, 2016 to file an appeal. The late filing of the appeal was not due to any Workforce Development error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service. See 871 IAC 24.35(2). Because the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See, Beardslee v. IDJS, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and Franklin v. IDJS, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The May 16, 2016, reference 10, decision is affirmed. The claimant's appeal from the decision was untimely. The decision that denied benefits effective May 8, 2016, based on an agency conclusion that the claimant failed to report as directed in response to a Letter of Inquiry and, therefore, could not be deemed available for work, remains in effect.

James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/pjs