

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

ANGEL S FLORES
226 N PARK ST
OSCEOLA IA 50213

OSCEOLA FOODS CORPORATION
c/o JON-JAY ASSOCIATES
P O BOX 182523
COLUMBUS OH 43218-2523

Appeal Number: 04A-UI-03910-S2T
OC: 03/14/04 R: 03
Claimant: Appellant (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 for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Angel Flores (claimant) appealed a representative's March 31, 2004 decision (reference 02) that concluded he was not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because he was discharged from work with Osceola Foods Corporation (employer) for conduct not in the best interest of the employer. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on May 10, 2004. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Judy Callahan, Personnel Manager; Kristin Moore, Team Leader; and Richard Rhum, Security Director. The employer offered one exhibit which was marked for identification as Exhibit One. Exhibit One was received into evidence.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant was hired on December 3, 2001, as a full-time production worker. The claimant has a history of making his co-workers feel frightened. The claimant was given at least two verbal warnings for threatening co-workers.

On March 11, 2004, the employer discovered that in the fall of 2003, the claimant took a fishing knife and cut a co-worker across his apron, arm and stomach. The co-worker was so frightened of the claimant that he did not report the claimant's actions to the employer when the incident occurred. When the employer discovered the incident, employees were asked about the claimant's behavior. Many co-workers related that they were scared of the claimant because he had threatened to hurt them. One employee related how the claimant said he would stick him with a knife and fillet him. The employer suspended the claimant on March 12, 2004, and terminated him on March 15, 2004.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct. For the following reasons the administrative law judge concludes he was.

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 of proof in establishing disqualifying job misconduct. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). Threat to make it “so miserable “ for employer is sufficient to establish misconduct. Myers v. Employment Appeal Board, 462 N.W.2d 734 (Iowa App. 1990). An employer has a right to expect employees to conduct themselves in a certain manner. The claimant disregarded the employer’s right by threatening and creating a hostile work environment for co-workers. The claimant’s disregard of the employer’s interests is misconduct. As such he is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

DECISION:

The representative’s March 31, 2004 decision (reference 02) is affirmed. The claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because he was discharged from work for misconduct. Benefits are withheld until he has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times his weekly benefit amount provided he is otherwise eligible.

bas/s