

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

FREDESVINDA GONZALEZ
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PERRY IA 50220-1504

TYSON FRESH MEATS INC
C/O TALX UCM SERVICES INC
PO BOX 283
ST LOUIS MO 63166-0283

Appeal Number: 06A-UI-06625-MT
OC: 05/28/06 R: 02
Claimant: Appellant (4)

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 96.4-3 - Able and Available

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated June 21, 2006, reference 01, which held claimant suspended for misconduct. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on July 19, 2006. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated by Tom Barragan, Employment Manager. Claimant failed to respond to the hearing notice and did not participate. Claimant called after the hearing was over to request participation. Claimant asserts that she had called and left a message on an answering machine with the number where she could be reached. The Appeals Bureau has no answering machines. All calls are taken in person. Claimant waited about 25 minutes to call in and inquire why she had not been called for the hearing.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant was off work due to an injury. Claimant was granted a full release to return to work without restrictions. Claimant refused to return to her old job even though she had no work restrictions.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue in this matter is whether claimant is able and available for work.

Iowa Code section 96.4-3 provides:

An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the department finds that:

3. The individual is able to work, is available for work, and is earnestly and actively seeking work. This subsection is waived if the individual is deemed partially unemployed, while employed at the individual's regular job, as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "b", unnumbered paragraph 1, or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification requirement for failure to apply for, or to accept suitable work of section 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

871 IAC 24.22(1)a provides:

Benefits eligibility conditions. For an individual to be eligible to receive benefits the department must find that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work. The individual bears the burden of establishing that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work.

(1) Able to work. An individual must be physically and mentally able to work in some gainful employment, not necessarily in the individual's customary occupation, but which is engaged in by others as a means of livelihood.

a. Illness, injury or pregnancy. Each case is decided upon an individual basis, recognizing that various work opportunities present different physical requirements. A statement from a medical practitioner is considered prima facie evidence of the physical ability of the individual to perform the work required. A pregnant individual must meet the same criteria for determining ableness as do all other individuals.

871 IAC 24.23(35) provides:

Availability disqualifications. The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

(35) Where the claimant is not able to work and is under the care of a physician and has not been released as being able to work.

Claimant has unduly restricted her ability to work since claimant has no doctor's orders taking her off work. She is not available for work due to personal preference for work assignments. Benefits are withheld until such time as she returns to work and declares availability for jobs within her prior work experience. Benefits shall be withheld effective May 28, 2006.

871 IAC 26.14(7) provides:

(7) If a party has not responded to a notice of telephone hearing by providing the appeals section with the names and telephone numbers of its witnesses by the scheduled time of the hearing, the presiding officer may proceed with the hearing.

a. If an absent party responds to the hearing notice while the hearing is in progress, the presiding officer shall pause to admit the party, summarize the hearing to that point, administer the oath, and resume the hearing.

b. If a party responds to the notice of hearing after the record has been closed and any party which has participated is no longer on the telephone line, the presiding officer shall not take the evidence of the late party. Instead, the presiding officer shall inquire as to why the party was late in responding to the notice of hearing. For good cause shown, the presiding officer shall reopen the record and cause further notice of hearing to be issued to all parties of record. The record shall not be reopened if the presiding officer does not find good cause for the party's late response to the notice of hearing.

c. Failure to read or follow the instructions on the notice of hearing shall not constitute good cause for reopening the record.

At issue is a request to reopen the record made after the hearing had concluded. The request to reopen the record is denied because the party making the request failed to participate by reading and following the instructions on the hearing notice.

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated June 21 2006, reference 01 is affirmed and modified. Claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits, effective May 28, 2006, until claimant meets the eligibility requirements of Iowa Code section 96.4-3. Claimant's request to reopen the record is denied as claimant failed to follow the instructions on the hearing notice.

mdm\cs