

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**CHARLENE SCHULTE**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO: 12A-UI-10238-BT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**GOOD SAMARITAN SOCIETY INC**  
Employer

**OC: 07/22/12**  
**Claimant: Respondent (2/R)**

Iowa Code § 96.5(2)(a) - Discharge for Misconduct  
Iowa Code § 96.3-7 - Overpayment

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Good Samaritan Society, Inc. (employer) appealed an unemployment insurance decision dated August 14, 2012, reference 01, which held that Charlene Schulte (claimant) was eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on September 17, 2012. The claimant participated in the hearing. The employer participated through Lori Treangen, Human Resources and Mary Stone, Dietary Head Cook. Employer's Exhibits One through Four were admitted into evidence. Based on the evidence, the arguments of the parties, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law, and decision.

**ISSUE:**

The issue is whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct sufficient to warrant a denial of unemployment benefits.

**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 employed as a part-time dietary assistant and head cook from August 29, 2005 through July 19, 2012. She was discharged for falsification of company time records. On July 17, 2012, the claimant changed a co-worker's punch out time and the alteration changed the amount of pay the co-worker was going to receive. Mary Stone, the head cook, did not have her timecard on July 17, 2012 so wrote her time in and out on the correction sheet. She wrote her out punch as 7:21 p.m. and the claimant subsequently changed it to 7:23 p.m. The employer has a seven minute rounding on the time punches so by the claimant changing that time, Ms. Stone was paid until 7:30 p.m.

The claimant told Ms. Stone she changed her time and Ms. Stone subsequently reported it to the employer. A co-worker also witnessed the claimant changing Ms. Stone's timecard. The claimant's out punch also appears to have been altered to reflect 7:30 p.m. but she contends Ms. Stone changed her time. Ms. Stone denies that allegation.

The claimant filed a claim for unemployment insurance benefits effective July 22, 2012 and has received benefits after the separation from employment.

### **REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

The issue is whether the employer discharged the claimant for work-connected misconduct. A claimant is not qualified to receive unemployment insurance benefits if an employer has discharged the claimant for reasons constituting work-connected misconduct. Iowa Code § 96.5-2-a.

Iowa Code § 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.

The employer has the burden to prove the discharged employee is disqualified for benefits due to work-related misconduct. *Sallis v. Employment Appeal Bd.*, 437 N.W.2d 895, 896 (Iowa 1989). The claimant was discharged on July 18, 2012 for falsification of time records. Misconduct must be substantial in nature to support a disqualification from unemployment benefits. *Gimbel v. Employment Appeal Board*, 489 N.W.2d 36, 39 (Iowa Ct. App. 1982). The focus is on deliberate, intentional, or culpable acts by the employee. *Id.* The claimant admitted she changed her co-worker's time on July 17, 2012. A reasonable person would know that falsifying time records is prohibited and would result in immediate termination, even without warning. The claimant's falsification of time records shows a willful or wanton disregard of the standard of behavior the employer has the right to expect from an employee, as well as an

intentional and substantial disregard of the employer's interests and of the employee's duties and obligations to the employer. Work-connected misconduct as defined by the unemployment insurance law has been established in this case and benefits are denied.

Iowa Code § 96.3(7) provides that benefits must be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later determined to be ineligible for benefits, even though the claimant acted in good faith and was not otherwise at fault. The overpayment recovery law was updated in 2008. See Iowa Code § 96.3(7)(b). Under the revised law, a claimant will not be required to repay an overpayment of benefits if all of the following factors are met. First, the prior award of benefits must have been made in connection with a decision regarding the claimant's separation from a particular employment. Second, the claimant must not have engaged in fraud or willful misrepresentation to obtain the benefits or in connection with the Agency's initial decision to award benefits. Third, the employer must not have participated at the initial fact-finding proceeding that resulted in the initial decision to award benefits. If Workforce Development determines there has been an overpayment of benefits, the employer will not be charged for the benefits, regardless of whether the claimant is required to repay the benefits.

Because the claimant has been deemed ineligible for benefits, any benefits the claimant has received could constitute an overpayment. Accordingly, the administrative law judge will remand the matter to the Claims Division for determination of whether there has been an overpayment, the amount of the overpayment, and whether the claimant will have to repay the benefits.

**DECISION:**

The unemployment insurance decision dated August 14, 2012, reference 01, is reversed. The claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because she was discharged from work for misconduct. Benefits are withheld until 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 matter is remanded to the Claims Section for investigation and determination of the overpayment issue.

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Susan D. Ackerman  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

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