

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**CIERA N WALKER**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 17A-UI-01059-S1-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**DIAM INC**  
Employer

**OC: 12/25/16**  
**Claimant: Respondent (1)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct  
Section 96.3-7 – Overpayment

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Diam (employer) appealed a representative's January 20, 2017, decision (reference 01) that concluded Ciera Walker (claimant) was eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for February 20, 2017. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Perry Tague, President; Keith Gordon, Manager; and Katie McKnight, Office Lead. Exhibit D-1 was received into evidence.

**ISSUE:**

The issue is whether the claimant was separated from employment for any disqualifying reason.

**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 22, 2016, as a full-time office administrator. The claimant signed for receipt of the employer's handbook on December 22, 2016. The employer and claimant are unaware of the employer's policy on attendance. On December 23, 2016, the claimant arrived at work at 8:05 a.m. The employer told the claimant that the start time was 8:00 a.m. On December 27, 2016, the claimant arrived at work at 8:10 a.m. The employer did not say anything to the claimant. On December 29, 2016, the claimant arrived at work at 8:20 a.m. The employer terminated her.

The claimant filed for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of December 25, 2016. The employer participated personally at the fact-finding interview on January 17, 2017, by Perry Tague.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was not discharged for misconduct.

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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.32(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 Dep't of Job Serv.*, 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). An employer may discharge an employee for any number of reasons or no reason at all, but if it fails to meet its burden of proof to establish job related misconduct as the reason for the separation, the employer incurs potential liability for unemployment insurance benefits related to that separation. Inasmuch as the employer had not previously warned the claimant about any of the issues leading to the separation, it has not met the burden of proof to establish the claimant acted deliberately or negligently in violation of company policy, procedure, or prior warning. If an employer expects an employee to conform to certain expectations or face discharge, appropriate (preferably written), detailed, and reasonable notice should be given. The employer did not cite the rule the claimant had violated or provide sufficient evidence of job-related misconduct. It did not meet its burden of proof to show misconduct. Benefits are allowed.

## **DECISION:**

The representative's January 20, 2017, decision (reference 01) is affirmed. The employer has not met its burden of proof to establish job related misconduct. Benefits are allowed, provided claimant is otherwise eligible.

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Beth A. Scheetz  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/rvs