

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

JAMES K SATER
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 08A-UI-00356-MT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

BERGELAND ENTERPRISES INC
ACTION XPRESS
Employer

OC: 12/16/07 R: 02
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated January 8, 2008, reference 01, which held claimant ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on January 28, 2008. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated by Diane Proctor, General Manager.

ISSUE:

The issue in this matter is whether claimant was discharged for misconduct.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and having considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant last worked for employer on December 11, 2007.

Claimant was discharged on December 11, 2007 by employer because claimant failed a drug test for controlled substances.

Claimant tested positive for drugs on post accident test. Employer discharged on the first offense for positive drug tests. Claimant was sent a notice by certified mail of the right to have a split sample tested.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

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.

871 IAC 24.32(8) provides:

(8) Past acts of misconduct. While past acts and warnings can be used to determine the magnitude of a current act of misconduct, a discharge for misconduct cannot be based on such past act or acts. The termination of employment must be based on a current act.

In this matter, the evidence established that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct when claimant violated employer's policy concerning drug testing. Claimant was warned concerning this policy.

The last incident, which brought about the discharge, constitutes misconduct because claimant violated a known company rule on drug use. Claimant was warned of the policy. Claimant was sent notice of his rights by certified mail to have a split sample tested at a laboratory of his choice. The Iowa Courts have held that certified mail notice is mandatory. Harrison v. Employment Appeal Board, 659 NW2d 581 (IA 2003). The test was valid, as it complied with Iowa law. The administrative law judge holds that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct and, as such, is disqualified for the receipt of unemployment insurance benefits.

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated January 8, 2008, reference 01, is affirmed. Unemployment insurance benefits shall be withheld until claimant has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times claimant's weekly benefit amount, provided claimant is otherwise eligible.

Marlon Mormann
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

mdm/kjw