

**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**

**ALICE J SINGH
3712 E SHERIDAN
DES MOINES IA 50317**

**SEARS ROEBUCK & COMPANY
c/o TALX UCM SERVICES INC
PO BOX 283
ST LOUIS MO 63166-0283**

**Appeal Number: 05A-UI-11786-RT
OC: 10-09-05 R: 02
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 96.6-2 – Initial Determination (Timeliness of Appeal)

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant, Alice J. Singh, filed an appeal from an unemployment insurance decision dated October 27, 2005, reference 01, denying unemployment insurance benefits to her. After due notice was issued, a telephone hearing was held on December 6, 2005, with the claimant not participating. The claimant did not call in a telephone number, either before the hearing or during the hearing, where she or any of her witnesses could be reached for the hearing, as instructed in the Notice of Appeal. Sid Bolton, Human Resources Manager, participated in the hearing for the employer, Sears Roebuck & Company. Department Exhibit One was admitted into evidence. The administrative law judge takes official notice of Iowa Workforce Development Department unemployment insurance records for the claimant.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having heard the testimony of the witness and having examined all of the evidence in the record, including Department Exhibit One, the administrative law judge finds: An authorized representative of Iowa Workforce Development issued a decision in this matter on October 27, 2005, reference 01, determining that the claimant was not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because records indicate she voluntarily quit work on September 22, 2005, by failing to report to work for three days in a row and not notifying her employer and this quitting was not caused by her employer. This decision was sent to the claimant on the same day, October 27, 2005, at the same address as shown on the claimant's attempted appeal. This decision indicated that an appeal had to be postmarked or otherwise received by the Appeal's Section by November 7, 2005 (the decision actually read November 6, 2005 but because this was a Sunday the appeal would be due the next business or working day). However, the claimant's attempted appeal was left with the local Workforce Development Office on November 18, 2005, making the appeal 11 days late. The claimant's attempted appeal is also dated November 18, 2005. The claimant did not participate in the hearing to provide reasons why her appeal was late.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The questions presented by this appeal are as follows:

1. Whether the claimant filed a timely appeal or, if not, whether the claimant demonstrated good cause for such failure. The administrative law judge concludes that the claimant's attempted appeal is not timely and the claimant has not demonstrated good cause for delay in the filing of her appeal and, as a consequence, the claimant's appeal should not be accepted and the administrative law judge does not have jurisdiction to reach the remaining issue.
2. Whether the claimant's separation from employment was a disqualifying event. The administrative law judge does not have jurisdiction to reach that issue.

Iowa Code section 96.6-2 provides:

2. Initial determination. A representative designated by the director shall promptly notify all interested parties to the claim of its filing, and the parties have ten days from the date of mailing the notice of the filing of the claim by ordinary mail to the last known address to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 10, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". Unless the claimant or other interested party,

after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was mailed to the claimant's last known address, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten calendar days for appeal begins running on the mailing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev., 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); Johnson v. Board of Adjustment, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

Pursuant to rules 871 IAC 26.2(96)(1) and 871 IAC 24.35(96)(1), appeals are considered filed when postmarked, if mailed. Messina v. IDJS, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983).

The record in this case shows that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. Franklin v. IDJS, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. Beardslee v. IDJS, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also In re Appeal of Elliott 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. Hendren v. IESC, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); Smith v. IESC, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal.

871 IAC 24.35(1) provides:

(1) Except as otherwise provided by statute or by department rule, any payment, appeal, application, request, notice, objection, petition, report or other information or document submitted to the department shall be considered received by and filed with the department:

a. If transmitted via the United States postal service or its successor, on the date it is mailed as shown by the postmark, or in the absence of a postmark the postage meter mark of the envelope in which it is received; or if not postmarked or postage meter marked or if the mark is illegible, on the date entered on the document as the date of completion.

b. If transmitted by any means other than the United States postal service or its successor, on the date it is received by the department.

871 IAC 24.35(2) provides:

(2) The submission of any payment, appeal, application, request, notice, objection, petition, report or other information or document not within the specified statutory or

regulatory period shall be considered timely if it is established to the satisfaction of the department that the delay in submission was due to department error or misinformation or to delay or other action of the United States postal service or its successor.

- a. For submission that is not within the statutory or regulatory period to be considered timely, the interested party must submit a written explanation setting forth the circumstances of the delay.
- b. The department shall designate personnel who are to decide whether an extension of time shall be granted.
- c. No submission shall be considered timely if the delay in filing was unreasonable, as determined by the department after considering the circumstances in the case.
- d. If submission is not considered timely, although the interested party contends that the delay was due to department error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States postal service or its successor, the department shall issue an appealable decision to the interested party.

The administrative law judge concludes that the claimant has the burden to prove that her appeal was timely or that she had good cause for delay in the filing of her appeal. The administrative law judge concludes that the claimant has failed to meet her burden of proof to demonstrate by a preponderance of the evidence either that her appeal was timely or that she had good cause for a delay in the filing of her appeal. The decision from which the claimant seeks to appeal was sent to her at the same address as shown on her attempted appeal. The decision indicated that an appeal had to be postmarked or otherwise received by the Appeal's Section by November 7, 2005 (the decision actually read November 6, 2005, but since that was a Sunday the appeal would be due the next business or working day). However, as shown at Department Exhibit One and as set out in the Findings of Fact, the claimant's attempted appeal was delivered to the local Workforce Development Office on November 18, 2005 making it 11 days late. The claimant did not participate in the hearing to provide reasons why her appeal was late. There is no evidence that the claimant's delay in filing her appeal was due to any error or misinformation on the part of Iowa Workforce Development or to delay or other action by the U.S. Postal Service. Accordingly, the administrative law judge concludes that the claimant has not demonstrated good cause for a delay in the filing of her appeal. Therefore, the administrative law judge concludes that the claimant's attempted appeal of the decision dated October 27, 2005, reference 01, is not timely and the claimant has not demonstrated good cause for delay in the filing of her appeal and, as a consequence, the claimant's appeal should not be accepted and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the other issue presented. The administrative law judge further concludes that the representative's decision of October 27, 2005, reference 01, should remain in full force and effect.

DECISION:

The representative's decision of October 27, 2005, reference 01, is to remain in full force and effect. The claimant, Alice J. Singh, is not entitled to receive unemployment insurance benefits until, or unless, she requalifies for such benefits. The claimant's attempted appeal is not timely and the claimant has not demonstrated good cause for its delay.

kkf/kjw