

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

**MANUEL A PEREZ AROCHE**  
Claimant

**BAINBRIDGE CONSTRUCTION LLC**  
Employer

**APPEAL 18A-UI-01829-LJ-T**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 01/07/18**  
**Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The claimant filed an appeal from the January 26, 2018, (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits based upon a determination that claimant was discharged for excessive, unexcused absenteeism and tardiness. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on March 7, 2018. The claimant, Manuel A. Perez Aroche, participated. The employer, Bainbridge Construction, L.L.C., participated through Josh Petersen, Supervisor; and Colleen Bainbridge, Secretary. Spanish/English interpreter Soctrates (ID number 10413) from CTS Language Link assisted with the hearing.

**ISSUE:**

Is the appeal timely?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: A disqualification decision was mailed to claimant's last known address of record on January 26, 2018. The first sentence of the decision states, "If this decision denies benefits and is not reversed on appeal, it may result in an overpayment which you will be required to repay." The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Bureau by February 5, 2018. The appeal was not filed until February 8, 2018, which is after the date noticed on the disqualification decision. Claimant explained that his mail goes to his ex-girlfriend's home. Claimant retrieves his mail every two or three days. He did not pick up his mail from his ex-girlfriend until February 6, 2018, at which time he discovered the decision. Claimant had been out of town working.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes claimant failed to file a timely appeal.

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. Bd. of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

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. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 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. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 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. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. Iowa Emp't Sec. Comm'n*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973). The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal.

The administrative law judge concludes that failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Agency error or

misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See *Beardslee v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979). The administrative law judge is sympathetic to claimant's personal circumstances. However, claimant did not present any good cause for failing to get his mail in a timely manner. Claimant's decision to check his mail only periodically and to leave town to seek employment are personal decisions that do not support a finding of timeliness in this case.

**DECISION:**

The January 26, 2018, (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect.

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Elizabeth A. Johnson  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

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