

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

ROBERT R PLATTNER  
1529 1<sup>ST</sup> AVE S  
DENISON IA 51442

SITEL CORPORATION  
PO BOX 6007  
OMAHA NE 68106-6007

Appeal Number: 04A-UI-08588-S2T  
OC: 07/04/04 R: 01  
Claimant: Respondent (2)

**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, 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

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(Administrative Law Judge)

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(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Sitel Corporation (employer) appealed a representative's August 2, 2004 decision (reference 02) that concluded Robert Plattner (claimant) was discharged and there was no evidence of willful or deliberate misconduct. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on September 27, 2004. The claimant did not provide a telephone number where he could be reached and, therefore, did not participate. The employer was represented by Suzanna Ettrich, Staff Attorney, and participated by Jill Johnston, Human Resources Manager and Norman Starr, Supervisor.

#### 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 September 29, 2003, as a full-time customer service professional. The claimant received a copy of the employer's handbook and signed for its receipt on September 29, 2003. The handbook indicates an employee should have an attendance rate of 90 percent or greater. Attendance of less than 90 percent for more than three pay periods would result in termination. An employee could make up an absence to keep a higher attendance percentage.

The employer issued the claimant written warnings for an attendance level below 90 percent on October 30, November 24 and December 23, 2003. The claimant's absences were due to leaving early, arriving tardy for work, weather issues and personal reasons. On January 13, 2004, the claimant notified the employer he would be absent due to personal reasons. The claimant's absence put the claimant below 90 percent attendance once again. He did not offer to make up his absence. The employer terminated the claimant on January 19, 2004, for excessive absenteeism after repeated warnings.

#### REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct. For the following reasons the administrative law judge concludes he was.

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.

This definition has been accepted by the Iowa Supreme Court as accurately reflecting the intent of the legislature. Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 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). Three incidents of tardiness or absenteeism after a warning constitutes misconduct. Clark v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 317 N.W.2d 517 (Iowa App. 1982). An employer has a right to expect employees to appear for work when scheduled. The claimant disregarded the employer's right by repeatedly being absent from work when scheduled. The claimant's disregard of the employer's interests is misconduct. As such, he is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

DECISION:

The representative's August 2, 2004 decision (reference 02) is reversed. The claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because he was discharged from work for misconduct. Benefits are withheld until he has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times his weekly benefit amount provided he is otherwise eligible.

bas/kjf