

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

JEFFREY L BROWN
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 10A-UI-17925-HT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

ACH FOOD CO INC
Employer

**OC: 11/07/10
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Section 96.5(2) – Discharge
Section 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant, Jeffrey Brown, filed an appeal from a decision dated December 14, 2010, reference 01. The decision disqualified him from receiving unemployment benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call on February 11, 2011. The claimant participated on his own behalf. The employer, ACH Food Company, Inc., participated by Human Resources Manager William Nelson. Exhibit D-1 was admitted into the record.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the appeal is timely.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

A disqualification decision was mailed to the claimant's last-known address of record on December 14, 2010. The claimant received the decision. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by December 24, 2010. The appeal was not filed until December 27, 2010, which is after the date noticed on the decision.

The due date of the decision was December 24, 2010, a Friday. It was not a legal holiday, a Saturday or a Sunday. The United States Postal Service was not closed. If the claimant had taken the appeal to the post office, it would have been postmarked within the ten-day time period required by law but he elected not to do so.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code § 96.6-2 provides in pertinent part:

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. . . . 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.

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).

(1) The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal.

The appeal information specifically states the appeal must be "postmarked or otherwise received" by the Appeals Section by December 24, 2010. The United States Postal Service was open that day and operating, and the claimant's decision to wait until the final day to try and file the appeal, and his decision not to mail it, means the appeal was not timely.

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated December 14, 2010, reference 01, is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect. The claimant is disqualified for unemployment benefits.

Bonny G. Hendricksmeier
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bgh/pjs