

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

MICHAEL S COURTNEY
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 14A-UI-07726-S2T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

CENTRO INC
Employer

**OC: 06/29/14
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Michael Courtney (claimant) appealed a representative's July 18, 2014, decision (reference 01) that concluded he was not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits after his separation from employment with Centro (employer). After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was scheduled for August 19, 2014. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Tracy Lennon, Human Resources Generalist, and Mike Steffens, Operations Manager.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the claimant was separated from employment for any disqualifying reason.

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 27, 2010, as a full-time machine operator. The claimant signed for receipt of the employer's handbook on September 27, 2010. On March 26, 2014, the employer issued the claimant a written warning for throwing a bucket of resin over a railing. The employer notified the claimant that further infractions could result in termination from employment.

On June 30, 2014, the claimant was prying two pieces apart that were stuck together when he smashed his hand. Three co-workers wrote statements saying they saw the claimant strike the mold with his air wand, doing damage to the mold. The claimant admits only striking the air wand against the railing to vent because his hand hurt. The employer terminated the claimant on or about July 1, 2014, for damaging the mold and/or using the wand to strike out.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged for misconduct.

Iowa Code § 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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.32(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 Dep't of Job Serv.*, 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). Repeated failure to follow an employer's instructions in the performance of duties is misconduct. Gilliam v. Atlantic Bottling Company, 453 N.W.2d 230 (Iowa App. 1990). An employer has a right to expect employees to follow instructions in the performance of the job. The claimant disregarded the employer's right by repeatedly failing to follow the employer's instructions. He failed to follow instructions when he threw resin, when he damaged the mold, and when he used the employer's tool as a rod. The claimant's disregard of the employer's interests is misconduct. As such the claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

DECISION:

The representative's July 18, 2014, decision (reference 01) is affirmed. The claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because the claimant was discharged from work for misconduct. Benefits are withheld until the claimant has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the claimant's weekly benefit amount, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

Beth A. Scheetz
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/pjs