

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

**ELENA A HARKNESS**  
Claimant

**TYSON FRESH MEATS INC**  
Employer

**APPEAL 20A-UI-09830-DB-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 04/26/20**  
**Claimant: Respondent (1)**

Iowa Code § 96.19(38) – Total, Partial, Temporary Unemployment  
Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

On August 12, 2020, the employer/appellant filed an appeal from the July 10, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that found the claimant was eligible for unemployment insurance benefits based upon her being on a short-term layoff. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on October 1, 2020. The claimant, Elena A. Harkness, did not participate. The employer, Tyson Fresh Meats Inc., participated through witness Lori Drenzo. The administrative law judge took official notice of the claimant's administrative records.

**ISSUE:**

Did the employer file a timely appeal?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: A decision that found the claimant was eligible for unemployment insurance benefits was mailed to the employer's correct address of record for its third party provider, Talx UCM Services Inc., on July 10, 2020. There was no testimony presented that the third party provider did not receive the decision in the mail prior to the appeal due date listed on the decision. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by July 20, 2020. The employer's representative filed the appeal on August 12, 2020.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes that the employer's appeal is untimely.

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 issuing the notice of the filing of the claim to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. All interested parties shall select a format as specified by the department to receive such notifications. 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, subsections 10 and 11, 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 issued, 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 issuing 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 issuing 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).

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2) provides:

Date of submission and extension of time for payments and notices.

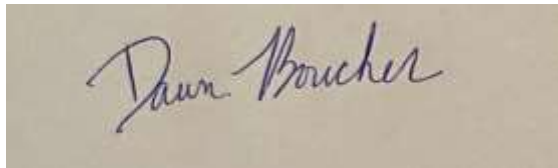
(2) The submission of any payment, appeal, application, request, notice, objection, petition, report or other information or document not within the specified statutory or regulatory period shall be considered timely if it is established to the satisfaction of the division that the delay in submission was due to division error or misinformation or to delay or other action of the United States postal service.

- 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 division 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 division error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States postal service, the division shall issue an appealable decision to the interested party.

There was no credible evidence presented that the employer's third-party representative did not receive the decision in the mail prior to the appeal due date. Waiting 22 days after the appeal due date to file an appeal is unreasonable pursuant to Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.35(2). As such, 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).

**DECISION:**

The July 10, 2020 (reference 01) decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely and the decision of the representative remains in effect. Benefits are allowed effective April 26, 2020 due to a short-term layoff, and provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dawn Boucher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

---

Dawn Boucher  
Administrative Law Judge

---

October 2, 2020  
Decision Dated and Mailed

db/sam