

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**JAAPER R KIER**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 13A-UI-07808-LT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**WELLS ENTERPRISES INC**  
Employer

**OC: 05/26/13**  
**Claimant: Respondent (2-R)**

Iowa Code § 96.5(1) – Voluntary Quitting  
Iowa Code § 96.3(7) – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer filed an appeal from the June 24, 2013, (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that allowed benefits. The parties were properly notified about the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on August 9, 2013. Claimant participated. Employer participated through human resources business partner, Courtney Willson and production supervisor, Chad Lamp and was represented by Alyce Smolsky of TALX. Employer's Exhibit 1 was received.

**ISSUES:**

Did claimant voluntarily quit the employment with good cause attributable to employer?

Is the claimant overpaid benefits?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant was employed full time as a production helper and was separated from employment on April 24, 2013. His last day of work was March 14, 2013. He asked Lamp for two months off to go to Africa to get married on May 4 and visit his sick mother. Summer is busy ice cream season so Lamp approved four weeks' leave from March 17 through April 21, 2013. He was expected to return to work on April 22 but did not return or call. The claimant was a no-call/no-show on April 22, 23 and 24, 2013. The employer's policy provides that no-call/no-show absences for three consecutive workdays is considered a voluntarily quitting of employment. Claimant e-mailed on April 30 he would not return until the end of May. Claimant was visiting in Africa at the border of Ethiopia and Sudan where there was fighting. He was not able to gain frequent, easy or safe access to areas with internet or phone reception. His airline ticket return date was April 19.

Claimant received unemployment benefits since filing a claim with an effective date of May 26, 2013.

## REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes claimant voluntarily left the employment without good cause attributable to the employer.

Iowa Code § 96.5-1 provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

1. Voluntary quitting. If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual's employer, if so found by the department.

871 IAC 24.25(4), (20) and (23) provide:

Voluntary quit without good cause. In general, a voluntary quit means discontinuing the employment because the employee no longer desires to remain in the relationship of an employee with the employer from whom the employee has separated. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.5. However, the claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving Iowa Code § 96.5, subsection (1), paragraphs "a" through "i," and subsection 10. The following reasons for a voluntary quit shall be presumed to be without good cause attributable to the employer:

(4) The claimant was absent for three days without giving notice to employer in violation of company rule.

(20) The claimant left for compelling personal reasons; however, the period of absence exceeded ten working days.

(23) The claimant left voluntarily due to family responsibilities or serious family needs.

Claimant has the burden of proving that the voluntary leaving was for good cause attributable to the employer. Iowa Code § 96.6(2). An employer is entitled to expect its employees to report to work as scheduled or to be notified when and why the employee is unable to report to work. The claimant had good reasons for not calling the three days because of the limited access to phone or internet communication and having to wait for imminent danger to pass in the area. However, since he exceeded his approved leave period by more than ten days to attend to his mother, he is considered to have voluntarily left employment without good cause attributable to the employer. While claimant's leaving the employment was certainly based upon good personal reasons it was not a good-cause reason attributable to the employer for leaving the employment. Benefits must be denied.

Iowa Code § 96.3-7, as amended in 2008, provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits.

a. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

b. (1) If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall

be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5. However, provided the benefits were not received as the result of fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual, benefits shall not be recovered from an individual if the employer did not participate in the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to section 96.6, subsection 2, and an overpayment occurred because of a subsequent reversal on appeal regarding the issue of the individual's separation from employment. The employer shall not be charged with the benefits.

(2) An accounting firm, agent, unemployment insurance accounting firm, or other entity that represents an employer in unemployment claim matters and demonstrates a continuous pattern of failing to participate in the initial determinations to award benefits, as determined and defined by rule by the department, shall be denied permission by the department to represent any employers in unemployment insurance matters. This subparagraph does not apply to attorneys or counselors admitted to practice in the courts of this state pursuant to section 602.10101.

Because claimant's separation was disqualifying, benefits were paid to which claimant was not entitled. The unemployment insurance law provides that benefits must be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later determined to be ineligible for benefits, even though the claimant acted in good faith and was not otherwise at fault. However, the overpayment may not be recovered when it is based on a reversal on appeal of an initial determination to award benefits on an issue regarding the claimant's employment separation if: (1) the benefits were not received due to any fraud or willful misrepresentation by the claimant and (2) the employer did not participate in the initial proceeding to award benefits. If so, the employer will not be charged for benefits whether or not the overpayment is recovered. Iowa Code § 96.3(7). In this case, the claimant has received benefits but was not eligible for those benefits.

**DECISION:**

The June 24, 2013 (reference 01) decision is reversed. Claimant voluntarily left the employment without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are withheld until such time as he has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times his weekly benefit amount, provided he is otherwise eligible.

**REMAND:** The matter of determining the amount of the potential overpayment and whether the overpayment should be recovered under Iowa Code § 96.3(7)b is remanded to the Agency.

---

Dévon M. Lewis  
Administrative Law Judge

---

Decision Dated and Mailed

dml/css