

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

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**CHARLES E CLAUSEN**  
Claimant

**APPEAL 18A-UI-03817-JCT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**TURNER ELECTRIC COMPANY INC**  
Employer

**OC: 02/25/18  
Claimant: Respondent (1)**

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Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Protest

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer, Turner Electric Company Inc., filed an appeal from the March 21, 2018, (reference 05) unemployment insurance decision that found the protest untimely and allowed benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call on April 20, 2018. The claimant participated personally. The employer participated by Terry Turner, vice president. Department's Exhibit D-1 was received. The administrative law judge took official notice of the administrative record, including the Notice of Claim and protest. Based on the evidence, the arguments presented, and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law, and decision.

**NOTE TO EMPLOYER:** To become a SIDES E-Response participant, you may send an email to [iwd-sidesinfo@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:iwd-sidesinfo@iwd.iowa.gov). To learn more about SIDES, visit <http://info.uisides.org>.

**ISSUE:**

Is the employer's protest timely?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant's notice of claim was mailed to employer's address of record on February 28, 2018. The notice of claim contained a warning that the employer protest response is due ten days from the initial notice date and gave a response deadline of March 12, 2018. The employer did not file a protest response until March 13, 2018, which is after the ten-day period had expired (Department Exhibit D-1).

Turner Electric Company Inc. is a long standing, family run business, consisting of approximately 12 employees. The employer's bookkeeper, Melissa, receives the office mail daily and distributes it. Mr. Turner is the designated person to handle mail from Iowa Workforce Development. Mr. Turner was absent from the office from February 26, 2018 until March 13, 2018, to attend a national buying conference in Nashville, Tennessee and to take vacation. Consequently, the envelope containing the notice of claim from Iowa Workforce Development was not opened until he returned on Tuesday, March 13, 2018, at which time he faxed a notice

of employer protest (Department Exhibit D-1) The business was still in operation during Mr. Turner's absence from the office but does not have anyone review mail for potentially time-sensitive matters while he is away.

### **REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes that employer has failed to protest response within the time period prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law.

Iowa Code § 96.6-2 provides in pertinent part:

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 mailing the notice of the filing of the claim by ordinary mail to the last known address to protest payment of benefits to the claimant.

Another portion of this same Code section dealing with timeliness of an appeal from a representative's decision states that such an appeal must be filed within ten days after notification of that decision was mailed. In addressing an issue of timeliness of an appeal under that portion of this Code section, the Iowa Supreme Court held that this statute prescribing the time for notice of appeal clearly limits the time to do so, and that compliance with the appeal notice provision is mandatory and jurisdictional. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979).

The administrative law judge considers the reasoning and holding of that court in that decision to be controlling on this portion of that same Iowa Code section which deals with a time limit in which to file a protest after notification of the filing of the claim has been mailed. The employer has not shown any good cause for not complying with the jurisdictional time limit. Therefore, the administrative law judge is without jurisdiction to entertain any appeal regarding the separation from employment.

Part of the same section of the unemployment insurance law deals with the timeliness of an appeal from a representative's decision and states an appeal must be filed within ten days after the date the decision was mailed to the parties. In addressing an issue of timeliness of an appeal, the Iowa Supreme Court concluded that when a statute creates a right to appeal and limits the time for appealing, compliance with the time limit is mandatory and jurisdictional. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979).

This reasoning should also apply to the time limit for filing a protest after a notice of claim has been mailed to the employer. Based on the evidence presented, the employer failed to file a protest within the time period prescribed by Iowa Code Section § 96.6(2). In this case, Mr. Turner generally handles mail received from Iowa Workforce Development. The notice of claim was mailed to the employer on February 28, 2018 and due on March 12, 2018. Mr. Turner was absent from the office from February 26, 2018 until March 13, 2018, to attend a conference in Nashville, Tennessee and for vacation. He did not delegate his mail to be handled in his absence. The employer's choice to not to designate the bookkeeper or someone to check employer mail during Mr. Turner's absence was a business decision.

The administrative law judge is sympathetic to the employer, but based on the evidence presented, concludes that the employer's failure to file a timely protest was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service, which under 871 IAC 24.35(2) would excuse the delay in filing the protest. Since the protest

was untimely, there is no jurisdiction to make a decision regarding the separation from employment. See *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979); *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979). Therefore, the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the claimant's separation from employment or authority to remand for a fact-finding interview. Iowa Code § 96.6(2).

**DECISION:**

The March 21, 2018, (reference 05) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. The employer has failed to file a timely protest response, and the unemployment insurance decision shall stand and remain in full force and effect.

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Jennifer L. Beckman  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

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