

IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Section  
1000 East Grand—Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
DECISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
68-0157 (7-97) – 3091078 - EI

AARON J WIDGER  
16 KELLY CIR  
SHENANDOAH IA 51601

PELLA CORPORATION  
c/o SHEAKLEY UNISERVICE INC  
PO BOX 1160  
COLUMBUS OH 43216-1160

Appeal Number: 04A-UI-06307-S2T  
OC: 05/09/04 R: 01  
Claimant: Respondent (2)

**This Decision Shall Become Final**, unless within fifteen (15) days from the date below, you or any interested party appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by submitting either a signed letter or a signed written Notice of Appeal, directly to the **Employment Appeal Board, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor—Lucas Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319**.

The appeal period will be extended to the next business day if the last day to appeal falls on a weekend or a legal holiday.

STATE CLEARLY

1. The name, address and social security number of the claimant.
2. A reference to the decision from which the appeal is taken.
3. That an appeal from such decision is being made and such appeal is signed.
4. The grounds upon which such appeal is based.

YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in this appeal or you may obtain a lawyer or other interested party to do so provided there is no expense to Workforce Development. If you wish to be represented by a lawyer, you may obtain the services of either a private attorney or one whose services are paid for with public funds. It is important that you file your claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

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(Administrative Law Judge)

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(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct  
Section 96.3-7 – Overpayment

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Pella Corporation (employer) appealed a representative's May 27, 2004 decision (reference 01) that concluded Aaron Widger (claimant) was discharged and there was no evidence of willful or deliberate misconduct. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on July 1, 2004. The claimant participated personally. The employer was represented by Richard Carter, Hearings Representative, and participated by Diane Carpenter, Human Resources Representative; Bob Rasmussen, Department Manager; and Craig Lary, Production Facilitator.

#### 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 March 9, 1998, as a full-time factory hourly specialist. The claimant received a copy of the employer's handbook and signed for its receipt on November 19, 2003. He signed for receipt of the employer's Respectful Work Environment Policy and for having had training in that area on March 17, 2003.

The claimant received a written warning on May 30, 2003, for having a temper and slamming items when he was angry. On August 27, 2003, the employer issued the claimant a written warning for not wearing proper safety equipment. The employer gave the claimant written warnings on October 6, 2003, and February 18, 2004, for wasting work time by talking to co-workers.

On May 6, 2004, the employer asked the claimant to help a female co-worker before his break. The claimant became frustrated with the equipment, became loud, slammed a part down on a machine, and walked away from his work area. After break, the claimant again became angry with his work situation. The co-worker became frightened and called for a supervisor. The supervisor noticed the co-worker had been crying. The claimant was loud and complaining about his work environment. When the supervisor could not get the claimant to calm down, he took the claimant and the co-worker to see the employer. The employer, after repeatedly telling the claimant to calm himself, finally calmed the claimant down enough that the claimant could return to work. On May 7, 2004, the employer terminated the claimant for violating the Respectful Work Environment policy.

#### REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The issue is whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct. For the following reasons the administrative law judge concludes he was.

Iowa Code Section 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.

871 IAC 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 Department of Job Service, 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 conduct themselves in a certain manner. The claimant disregarded the employer's right by failing to follow the employer's policies after repeated warning. The claimant's disregard of the employer's interests is misconduct. As such, he is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits.

Iowa Code Section 96.3-7 provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits. 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.

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.

The claimant has received benefits in the amount of \$151.00 since filing his claim herein. Pursuant to this decision, those benefits now constitute an overpayment which must be repaid.

#### DECISION:

The representative's May 27, 2004 decision (reference 01) is reversed. The claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits because he was discharged from work for misconduct. Benefits are withheld until he has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times his weekly benefit amount, provided he is otherwise eligible. The claimant is overpaid benefits in the amount of \$151.00.

bas/b