

**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS AND APPEALS  
ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS DIVISION, UI APPEALS BUREAU**

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**TUYEN Q NGUYEN**  
Claimant

**APPEAL 23A-UI-02779-SN-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**PACKERS SANITATION SERVICES INC  
LLC**  
Employer

**OC: 01/29/23  
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

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Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal  
Iowa Code § 96.5(1) – Voluntary Quit

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The claimant, Tuyen Q. Nguyen, filed an appeal from the March 3, 2023, (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits based upon his voluntary resignation. The parties were properly notified about the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on April 3, 2023 at 8:00 a.m. Human Resources Division Administrator Chris Nelson was ready to participate for the employer. The claimant participated. The claimant participated through the use of a Vietnamese interpreter provided by CTS Language Link. The employer participated through Human Resources Division Administrator Christopher Nelson. Exhibits D-1 and D-2 were received into the record.

**ISSUES:**

Whether the claimant's appeal is timely? Whether there are reasonable grounds outside of the claimant's control that warrant extending the appeal period to provide the claimant an opportunity to appeal?

Whether the claimant's separation is disqualifying?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds:

A disqualification decision was mailed to claimant's last known address of record on March 3, 2023. (Exhibit D-1) The claimant did receive the decision within ten days. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by March 13, 2023. The appeal was not filed until March 14, 2023, which is after the date noticed on the disqualification decision. (Exhibit D-2)

The claimant does not read or write English. However, the claimant does recognize Iowa Workforce Development Department decisions. When he receives one, the claimant typically takes the decision down to his local office the day after receiving it. The claimant said he

believed he received the decision three weeks ago, but he could not say the day of the week or day of the month he received it.

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

The administrative law judge finds the claimant's appeal is untimely. He further finds there are not reasonable grounds to extend the appeal period.

It is the duty of the administrative law judge as the trier of fact in this case, to determine the credibility of witnesses, weigh the evidence and decide the facts in issue. *Arndt v. City of LeClaire*, 728 N.W.2d 389, 394-395 (Iowa 2007). The administrative law judge may believe all, part or none of any witness's testimony. *State v. Holtz*, 548 N.W.2d 162, 163 (Iowa App. 1996). In assessing the credibility of witnesses, the administrative law judge should consider the evidence using his or her own observations, common sense and experience. *Id.* In determining the facts, and deciding what testimony to believe, the fact finder may consider the following factors: whether the testimony is reasonable and consistent with other believable evidence; whether a witness has made inconsistent statements; the witness's appearance, conduct, age, intelligence, memory and knowledge of the facts; and the witness's interest in the trial, their motive, candor, bias and prejudice. *Id.*

After assessing the credibility of the witnesses who testified during the hearing, considering the applicable factors listed above, and using his own common sense and experience, the administrative law judge finds the claimant's testimony regarding when he received the decision and when he appealed not credible primarily for two reasons.

First, the administrative law judge has not encountered a witness who has been so evasive in response to questioning. Nearly every question the administrative law judge posed to the claimant regarding any of the issues had to be repeated multiple times because he gave non-responsive answers.

Second, the administrative law judge notes the claimant could not remember any of the relevant dates needed for either the substantive issues or the timeliness issues. He could not remember when he started work with the employer. He could not remember his last day. He could not remember when he provided doctor's notes. He could not remember the details of those doctor's notes. He could not remember the day of the week or month that he received the decision he appealed. Given these themes in memory, the administrative law judge does not find his eventual assertion that he received it "three weeks" before the hearing date credible. He also does not find the claimant's allegation that it is his practice to bring decisions to Iowa Workforce Development Department the day after receipt as credible. That is because when the administrative law judge asked him if that is what he did in this case, the claimant merely repeated it is his practice to bring them in the day after.

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 issuance of 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 mailing 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. Board of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

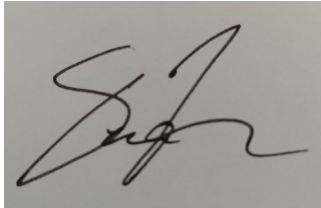
The record in this case shows that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. IDJS*, 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. IDJS*, 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. IESC*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. IESC*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973).

Since the claimant filed this appeal one day after the filing deadline. It is his burden to show that reasonable circumstances exist to extend the appeal period. In this case, the claimant did not remember the day of the month or even the day of the week he received the decision or filed the appeal. Instead of providing specific dates, the claimant repeated the same information in an evasive manner. The claimant has not met his burden of production.

The administrative law judge concludes that failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to 871 IAC 24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that 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. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

**DECISION:**

The March 3, 2023, (reference 01), decision is AFFIRMED. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Sean M. Nelson'.

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Sean M. Nelson  
Administrative Law Judge II  
Iowa Department of Inspections & Appeals  
Administrative Hearings Division – UI Appeals Bureau

April 4, 2023  
Decision Dated and Mailed

smn/mh

**APPEAL RIGHTS.** If you disagree with the decision, you or any interested party may:

1. Appeal to the Employment Appeal Board within fifteen (15) days of the date under the judge's signature by submitting a written appeal via mail, fax, or online to:

**Employment Appeal Board  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor – Lucas Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
Fax: (515)281-7191  
Online: eab.iowa.gov**

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.

**AN APPEAL TO THE BOARD SHALL 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.

An Employment Appeal Board decision is final agency action. If a party disagrees with the Employment Appeal Board decision, they may then file a petition for judicial review in district court.

2. If no one files an appeal of the judge's decision with the Employment Appeal Board within fifteen (15) days, the decision becomes final agency action, and you have the option to file a petition for judicial review in District Court within thirty (30) days after the decision becomes final. Additional information on how to file a petition can be found at Iowa Code §17A.19, which is online at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf> or by contacting the District Court Clerk of Court <https://www.iowacourts.gov/iowa-courts/court-directory/>.

**Note to Parties:** YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in the appeal or 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.

**Note to Claimant:** It is important that you file your weekly claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

**SERVICE INFORMATION:**

A true and correct copy of this decision was mailed to each of the parties listed.

**DERECHOS DE APELACIÓN.** Si no está de acuerdo con la decisión, usted o cualquier parte interesada puede:

1. Apelar a la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo dentro de los quince (15) días de la fecha bajo la firma del juez presentando una apelación por escrito por correo, fax o en línea a:

**Employment Appeal Board  
4th Floor – Lucas Building  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
Fax: (515)281-7191  
En línea: eab.iowa.gov**

El período de apelación se extenderá hasta el siguiente día hábil si el último día para apelar cae en fin de semana o día feriado legal.

**UNA APELACIÓN A LA JUNTA DEBE ESTABLECER CLARAMENTE:**

- 1) El nombre, dirección y número de seguro social del reclamante.
- 2) Una referencia a la decisión de la que se toma la apelación.
- 3) Que se interponga recurso de apelación contra tal decisión y se firme dicho recurso.
- 4) Los fundamentos en que se funda dicho recurso.

Una decisión de la Junta de Apelaciones de Empleo es una acción final de la agencia. Si una de las partes no está de acuerdo con la decisión de la Junta de Apelación de Empleo, puede presentar una petición de revisión judicial en el tribunal de distrito.

2. Si nadie presenta una apelación de la decisión del juez ante la Junta de Apelaciones Laborales dentro de los quince (15) días, la decisión se convierte en acción final de la agencia y usted tiene la opción de presentar una petición de revisión judicial en el Tribunal de Distrito dentro de los treinta (30) días después de que la decisión adquiriera firmeza. Puede encontrar información adicional sobre cómo presentar una petición en el Código de Iowa §17A.19, que se encuentra en línea en <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf> o comunicándose con el Tribunal de Distrito Secretario del tribunal <https://www.iowacourts.gov/iowa-courts/court-directory/>.

**Nota para las partes:** USTED PUEDE REPRESENTARSE en la apelación u obtener un abogado u otra parte interesada para que lo haga, siempre que no haya gastos para Workforce Development. Si desea ser representado por un abogado, puede obtener los servicios de un abogado privado o uno cuyos servicios se paguen con fondos públicos.

**Nota para el reclamante:** es importante que presente su reclamo semanal según las instrucciones, mientras esta apelación está pendiente, para proteger su derecho continuo a los beneficios.

**SERVICIO DE INFORMACIÓN:**

Se envió por correo una copia fiel y correcta de esta decisión a cada una de las partes enumeradas.