

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

RONDA M CHILDRESS
Claimant

APPEAL 19A-UI-06083-DB-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

FISHER CONTROLS INTERNATIONAL LLC
Employer

**OC: 06/16/19
Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Iowa Code 96.4(3) – Able to and Available for Work
Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant/appellant filed an appeal from the July 15, 2019 (reference 02) unemployment insurance decision that found that the claimant was not eligible for benefits because she was not able to perform work at this time due to illness. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on August 19, 2019. The claimant, Ronda M. Childress, participated personally. The employer, Fisher Controls International LLC, did not participate.

ISSUE:

Did the claimant 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 not eligible for unemployment insurance benefits beginning June 16, 2019 due to her not being able to perform work due to illness was mailed to the claimant's correct address of record on July 15, 2019. The claimant received the decision prior to the appeal deadline listed on the decision. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by July 25, 2019. The claimant filed her appeal on August 1, 2019 via the online appeals website. The claimant had received a decision dated July 15, 2019 (reference 03) that stated she was eligible for benefits beginning July 7, 2019 because she was medically able to work, as long as she met all other eligibility requirements. Claimant was confused by the two decisions. She believed that the decision dated July 15, 2019 (reference 03) meant that she was eligible for benefits and the previous decision denying her benefits had been reversed. However, it was not until August 1, 2019 that claimant contacted Iowa Workforce Development by telephone to inquire why she was not receiving benefits.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

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

Iowa Code § 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 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. 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 § 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to § 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 § 96.5, subsection 10, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to § 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving § 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 mailed to the claimant's last known address, 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 § 96.8, subsection 5.

(emphasis added).

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

The appeal in this case was filed online on August 1, 2019. 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. 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). The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal because she had received the decision in the mail prior to the due date. Claimant's 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 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 15, 2019 (reference 02) decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely and the decision of the representative remains in effect.

Dawn Boucher
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

db/rvs