

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

**AMY HILEMAN**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 11A-UI-06404-PT**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**WELLS FARGO BANK NA**  
Employer

**OC: 04/10/11**  
**Claimant: Respondent (2R)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Employer filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated May 4, 2011, reference 01, which held claimant eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on June 9, 2011. Employer participated by Tammy Cook, loan servicing manager and was represented by Kelly Landolfi from Barnett & Associates. Claimant did participate. Employer Exhibit One was admitted into evidence.

**ISSUE:**

The issue in this matter is whether claimant was discharged for misconduct.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant was employed from September 21, 2010 through April 13, 2011. She was discharged from her employment because she was avoiding calls by not responding when the customer answered and said hello. This occurred on multiple occasions from March 1 through March 31, 2011. It was discovered in an investigation that the employer began on April 1, 2011. Claimant was allowed to listen to the recordings of the calls on April 8, 2011. At that time she indicated that she may have had the mute function engaged at the time of the calls and not realized it. However, the employer's investigation found that claimant did not have this problem when she reached a customer with voicemail. The claimant knew that call avoidance was grounds for immediate termination.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

Iowa Code § 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.

The employer has established that claimant avoided calls as a deliberate violation of the employer's work rules and the employer's best interests. The administrative law judge holds that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct and, as such, is disqualified for the receipt of unemployment insurance benefits.

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.

The issue of whether the claimant is overpaid is remanded for determination.

**DECISION:**

The decision of the representative dated May 4, 2011, reference 01, is reversed. Unemployment insurance benefits shall be withheld until claimant has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times claimant's weekly benefit amount, provided claimant is otherwise eligible. The issue of whether the claimant is overpaid is remanded for determination.

---

Ron Pohlman  
Administrative Law Judge

---

Decision Dated and Mailed

rrp/pjs