

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

AMANDA BROMBAUGH
Claimant

NORTHWESTERN PLASTICS LTD
Employer

APPEAL 23A-UI-03017-JT-T
**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 03/05/23
Claimant: Appellant (6R)

Iowa Code § 96.5(1)(d) – Voluntary Quit Due to Non-work Related Illness or Injury
Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) – Dismissal of Appeal on Default

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

On March 21, 2023, Amanda Brombaugh (claimant) filed a timely appeal from the March 17, 2023 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that disqualified the claimant for benefits and that held the employer's account would not be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion the claimant voluntarily quit on March 3, 2023 without good cause attributable to the employer and due to a non-work related illness or injury. A notice of hearing was mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record for a telephone hearing scheduled for 8:00 a.m. on April 19, 2023. Neither party appeared for the hearing. Neither party complied with the hearing notice instructions to call the toll-free number at the time of the hearing. Based upon the claimant/appellant's failure to participate in the hearing and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law and decision.

ISSUE:

Whether the appeal should be dismissed based on the claimant/appellant's failure to appear and participate.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The claimant is the appellant in this matter. This matter was initially set for hearing on April 6, 2023. The Appeals Bureau mailed notice of the April 6, 2023 hearing to the parties' address of record on March 24, 2023. On April 6, 2023, the employer appeared through Autumn Meinders, but the claimant/appellant did not appear. The administrative the administrative law judge could not at that time proceed with a hearing or dismiss the appeal. This was because the hearing omitted issue statements and law citations pertaining to the separation issues. For that reason, the administrative law adjourned the April 6, 2023 proceeding and dismissed the employer. The Appeals Bureau rescheduled the hearing to 8:00 a.m. on April 19, 2023 and mailed a corrected notice to the parties' address of record on April 7, 2023. The parties were properly notified of the April 19, 2023 scheduled hearing for this appeal. The claimant/appellant failed to call the toll-free number listed on the hearing notice at the time of the hearing. The appellant did not participate or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice.

The hearing notice instructed the parties as follows:

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

YOU MUST CALL the toll-free number: ... at the time of the hearing. You may call up to 5 minutes before the hearing. You are not the organizer – Do NOT press 2. The administrative law judge **WILL NOT** call you for the hearing, you **MUST** call into the number provided above to participate. **Failure to participate in the hearing may result in the dismissal of your appeal.**

The back page of the hearing notice provides further instruction and warning:

Failure to Participate or Register for Appeal Hearing

If you do not participate in the hearing, the judge may dismiss the appeal or issue a decision without considering your evidence.

As a courtesy to the claimant/appellant the record was left open until 8:15 a.m. to give the claimant/appellant a reasonable opportunity to participate.

The March 17, 2023 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision disqualified the claimant for benefits and held the employer's account would not be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion the claimant voluntarily quit on March 3, 2023 without good cause attributable to the employer and due to a non-work related illness or injury.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The Iowa Administrative Procedure Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides that if a party fails to appear or participate in a hearing after proper service of notice, the judge may enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) provides:

(7) If a party has not responded to a notice of telephone hearing by providing the appeals bureau with the names and telephone numbers of the persons who are participating in the hearing by the scheduled starting time of the hearing or is not available at the telephone number provided, the presiding officer may proceed with the hearing. If the appealing party fails to provide a telephone number or is unavailable for the hearing, the presiding officer may decide the appealing party is in default and dismiss the appeal as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.12(3). The record may be reopened if the absent party makes a request to reopen the hearing in writing under subrule 26.8(3) and shows good cause for reopening the hearing.

The claimant/appellant did not call the toll-free number listed on the hearing notice at the time of the hearing. The appellant is in default. The appeal is be dismissed.

If the appellant disagrees with this decision, the appellant may appeal the decision pursuant to the instructions on the last page of this decision.

DECISION:

The claimant defaulted on the appeal. The appeal is dismissed. The March 17, 2023 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that disqualified the claimant for benefits and that held the employer's account would not be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion the claimant voluntarily quit on March 3, 2023 without good cause attributable to the employer and due to a non-work related illness or injury, remains in effect.

REMAND:

This matter is REMANDED to IWD Benefits Bureau for determination of whether the claim should be locked for the period beginning February 5, 2023 and whether the claimant was overpaid benefits for the period of February 5, 2023 through April 15, 2023. While preparing for this appeal hearing, the administrative law judge noted that IWD had erroneously failed to lock the claimant or had erroneously unlocked the claim in connection with an April 4, 2023 (reference 02) availability determination. The administrative law judge locked the claim in connection with entry of the present default decision and due to the March 17, 2023 (reference 01) disqualification decision. However, KLCK does not allow the administrative law judge to enter the lock for the period involved in the February 5, 2023 additional claim that was part of the March 6, 2022 benefit year.

Based on the content of the claimant's appeal letter, this matter is REMANDED to IWD Benefits Bureau for determination of whether the claimant has been able to work and available for work since February 5, 2023. The April 4, 2023 (reference 02) availability determination appears to be at odds with the information the claimant set forth in her appeal letter pertaining to the present appeal matter. The appeal letter, dated March 17, 2023, states as follows:

My doctor told me the only way to fix it was to have surgery cause I have went thru it on my left foot 3 years ago. I called + told them [Northwestern Plastics, Ltd.] right after I got out of the drs office. I plan on returning after I get released from the doctor but I still haven't been released. They told me that I had no other choice + that I could file for unemployment. It was caused by the employer when they tell ya that you have to + and that there is no other choice. For the second think they [IWD} have the date wrong on which I went out.



James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

April 20, 2023
Decision Dated and Mailed

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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
4th 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>.

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 está en línea en <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/code/17A.19.pdf>.

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.