

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

**PATRICE STOTT**  
Claimant

**ANNETT HOLDINGS INC**  
Employer

**APPEAL 20A-UI-00648-DB-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 12/22/19**  
**Claimant: Respondent (1)**

Iowa Code § 96.5(2)a – Discharge for Misconduct  
Iowa Code § 96.3(7) – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.10 – Employer/Representative Participation Fact-finding Interview

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

The employer/appellant filed an appeal from the January 14, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision that allowed unemployment insurance benefits to the claimant based upon her discharge from employment. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on February 6, 2020. The claimant, Patrice Stott, participated personally. The employer, Annett Holdings Inc., participated through witnessed Brett Crable, Banmala Hayes, Shane Conaway, and Melissa Smith. Employer's Exhibits 1 through 11 were admitted. The administrative law judge took administrative notice of the claimant's unemployment insurance benefits records including the fact-finding documents.

**ISSUES:**

Was the claimant discharged for disqualifying job-related misconduct?  
Has the claimant been overpaid any unemployment insurance benefits, and if so, can the repayment of those benefits to the agency be waived?  
Can any charges to the employer's account be waived?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: Claimant was employed full-time beginning in July 21, 2014 and ending November 5, 2019. She worked as a full-time carrier sales specialist at the time of separation from employment. Claimant's direct supervisor was Brett Crable. Claimant's job duties involved contacting carriers to accept loads of freight. She would make arrangements on price and would follow the load to ensure safe delivery.

On November 5, 2019, Mr. Crable met with the claimant in person and told her she was discharged for her negative attitude. He did not feel that her attitude fit the employer's brand and work culture. He believed her negative energy was bringing other co-workers down. No current act of misconduct was relied upon for claimant's discharge. There was no current

incident of profane language, threatening behavior, intimidation or negative comments in the workplace. Claimant had received no discipline during the course of her employment.

Claimant has received \$826.00 in gross unemployment insurance benefits since filing her claim with an effective date of December 22, 2019. Mr. Crable participated by telephone in the fact-finding interview and provided information to the interviewer about claimant's discharge from employment.

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

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

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.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.32(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 Dep't of Job Serv.*, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979).

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.32(4) provides:

(4) Report required. The claimant's statement and employer's statement must give detailed facts as to the specific reason for the claimant's discharge. Allegations of

misconduct or dishonesty without additional evidence shall not be sufficient to result in disqualification. If the employer is unwilling to furnish available evidence to corroborate the allegation, misconduct cannot be established. In cases where a suspension or disciplinary layoff exists, the claimant is considered as discharged, and the issue of misconduct shall be resolved.

The employer has the burden of proof in establishing disqualifying job-related misconduct. *Cosper v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). The issue is not whether the employer made a correct decision in separating claimant, but whether the claimant is entitled to unemployment insurance benefits. *Infante v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 364 N.W.2d 262 (Iowa Ct. App. 1984). What constitutes misconduct justifying termination of an employee and what misconduct warrants denial of unemployment insurance benefits are two separate decisions. *Pierce v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 425 N.W.2d 679 (Iowa Ct. App. 1988). Misconduct serious enough to warrant discharge is not necessarily serious enough to warrant a denial of job insurance benefits. Such misconduct must be "substantial." *Newman v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 351 N.W.2d 806 (Iowa Ct. App. 1984). When based on carelessness, the carelessness must actually indicate a "wrongful intent" to be disqualifying in nature. *Id.* Negligence does not constitute misconduct unless recurrent in nature; a single act is not disqualifying unless indicative of a deliberate disregard of the employer's interests. *Henry v. Iowa Dep't of Job Serv.*, 391 N.W.2d 731 (Iowa Ct. App. 1986).

The employer has failed to establish any current incident of disqualifying job-related misconduct. As such, benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible. Because benefits are allowed, the issue of overpayment is moot. The employer's account may be charged for benefits paid.

**DECISION:**

The January 14, 2020 (reference 01) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. Claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason. Benefits are allowed, provided she is otherwise eligible. The employer's account may be charged for benefits paid.

---

Dawn Boucher  
Administrative Law Judge

---

Decision Dated and Mailed

db/rvs