

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Section  
1000 East Grand—Des Moines, Iowa 50319  
DECISION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
68-0157 (7-97) – 3091078 - EI**

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**CARE INITIATIVES  
c/o JOHNSON & ASSOCIATES  
PO BOX 6007  
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**Appeal Number: 04A-UI-04987-MT  
OC: 04/11/04 R: 03  
Claimant: Respondent (1)**

**This Decision Shall Become Final**, unless within fifteen (15) days from the date below, you or any interested party appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by submitting either a signed letter or a signed written Notice of Appeal, directly to the **Employment Appeal Board, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor—Lucas Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.**

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.

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.

YOU MAY REPRESENT yourself in this appeal or you may 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. It is important that you file your claim as directed, while this appeal is pending, to protect your continuing right to benefits.

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(Administrative Law Judge)

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(Decision Dated & Mailed)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Employer filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated April 27, 2004, reference 01, which held claimant eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on May 27, 2004. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated by Lyn Corbeil, Attorney Talx UCExpress with witnesses, Barb Bernard, Director of Nursing, and Jennifer Streeper, LPN Charge Nurse. Exhibits One through Five were admitted into evidence.

#### FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant last worked for employer on March 22, 2004.

Claimant was discharged on April 13, 2004 by employer because claimant allegedly verbally abused a client by stating: "shut up" or "stop it" in a loud and rude voice. Claimant did not use a loud or rude voice to tell the resident to be quiet. Claimant was loud as she was speaking from a hall.

Claimant had no warnings on her record putting her on notice that discharge would result on the next policy violation.

#### REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

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

Iowa Code Section 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.

This definition has been accepted by the Iowa Supreme Court as accurately reflecting the intent of the legislature. Huntoon v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 275 N.W.2d 445, 448 (Iowa 1979).

871 IAC 24.32(8) provides:

(8) Past acts of misconduct. While past acts and warnings can be used to determine the magnitude of a current act of misconduct, a discharge for misconduct cannot be based on such past act or acts. The termination of employment must be based on a current act.

In this matter, the evidence fails to establish that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct when claimant violated employer's policy concerning verbal abuse. Claimant was not warned concerning this policy.

The last incident, which brought about the discharge fails to constitute misconduct because claimant's testimony is as credible as the employer's version. The employer has the burden of proof in a discharge case. As such, employer has failed in its burden of proof in proving verbal abuse. The event, which brought about the discharge, was alleged verbal abuse by the tone of voice. Claimant was fired because of the "tone of her voice". This is so very subjective that insufficient evidence is present to prove this as an incident of verbal abuse. Employer also indicated a discharge for failing to follow orders. However, that was not a reason for the discharge at the time of separation. It is not considered here as an issue of misconduct as it apparently came up after the fact. The administrative law judge holds that claimant was not discharged for an act of misconduct and, as such, is not disqualified for the receipt of unemployment insurance benefits.

**DECISION:**

The decision of the representative dated April 27, 2004, reference 01, is affirmed. Claimant is eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits, provided claimant meets all other eligibility requirements.

mdm\kjf