

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

VERA DYE
Claimant

WHIRLPOOL CORPORATION
Employer

APPEAL 21A-UI-23049-SN-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 03/29/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Ability to and Availability for Work
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22 – Able & Available - Benefits Eligibility Conditions
Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant filed an appeal from the March 24, 2021, (reference 02) unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits effective February 7, 2021. After due notice was issued, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled to be held on December 9, 2021. The claimant participated. The employer participated through Human Resources Specialist Colin Evers. Exhibits D-1 and D-2 were received into the record.

ISSUES:

Whether the claimant's appeal is timely? Whether there are reasonable grounds which make her appeal otherwise timely?

Was the claimant able to work, available for work, and actively and earnestly seeking work the week ending February 7, 2021?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds:

A disqualification decision was mailed to claimant's last known address of record on March 24, 2021. The claimant did receive the decision within ten days. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by April 3, 2021. (Exhibit D-1) The appeal was not filed until October 15, 2021, which is after the date noticed on the disqualification decision. (Exhibit D-2)

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The administrative law judge concludes the claimant's appeal is not timely. The administrative law judge further concludes he does not have jurisdiction to evaluate the merits of the claimant's appeal.

Iowa Code section 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 issuing the notice of the filing of the claim to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. All interested parties shall select a format as specified by the department to receive such notifications. 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 section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 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 section 96.5, subsections 10 and 11, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 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 issued, 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 section 96.8, subsection 5.

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

The record in this case shows that 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. IDJS*, 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. IDJS*, 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. IESC*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. IESC*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973).

It is the duty of the administrative law judge as the trier of fact in this case, to determine the credibility of witnesses, weigh the evidence and decide the facts in issue. *Arndt v. City of LeClaire*, 728 N.W.2d 389, 394-395 (Iowa 2007). The administrative law judge may believe all, part or none of any witness's testimony. *State v. Holtz*, 548 N.W.2d 162, 163 (Iowa App. 1996). In assessing the credibility of witnesses, the administrative law judge should consider the evidence using his or her own observations, common sense and experience. *Id.* In determining the facts, and deciding what testimony to believe, the fact finder may consider the

following factors: whether the testimony is reasonable and consistent with other believable evidence; whether a witness has made inconsistent statements; the witness's appearance, conduct, age, intelligence, memory and knowledge of the facts; and the witness's interest in the trial, their motive, candor, bias and prejudice. *Id.*

After assessing the credibility of the witnesses who testified during the hearing, considering the applicable factors listed above, and using his own common sense and experience, the administrative law judge finds the claimant's allegation she filed an appeal on March 21, 2021, not credible.

During the hearing, the claimant claimed she filed an appeal on March 21, 2021, by faxing in a handwritten statement to the facsimile number for the Appeals Bureau. There is no record of an appeal fitting that description that can be found in the Appeals Bureau's records. It would also pre-date the date of the decision below if true, which does not logically follow.

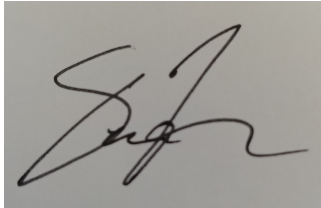
Furthermore, the claimant's testimony generally was not credible, which tends to undermine the credibility of her testimony on this point. The administrative law judge wants to be clear that he is not accusing the claimant of lying, merely that her memory on this point and other points is not reliable. For instance, she initially said that the employer's plant shutdown due to lack of parts of an ice storm in February 2021. After the employer's witness testified the plant did not shut down, but rather she had been placed on leave because she exhibited Covid19 symptoms, the claimant stated he was correct. Then during her rebuttal, the claimant said the plant had closed down to sterilize all of the equipment, which is not consistent either with the employer's testimony or her earlier testimony.

The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal.

The administrative law judge concludes that 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 871 IAC 24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that 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. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The March 24, 2021, (reference 02) unemployment insurance decision is affirmed. The claimant's appeal is not timely, and the decision below remains in effect.



Sean M. Nelson
Administrative Law Judge
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau
1000 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209
Fax (515) 725-9067

January 12, 2022
Decision Dated and Mailed

smn/kmj

NOTE TO CLAIMANT: This decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits. If you disagree with this decision you may file an appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision.

The administrative law judge would like to point out however, the claimant has been approved for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits for this same period. He is writing this note to the claimant to inform her that it is not possible to receive regular unemployment insurance benefits and PUA benefits for the same period in question.