

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

LAURA L DOWNER
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 12A-UI-11420-HT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

SEABURY & SMITH INC
Employer

**OC: 02/20/11
Claimant: Appellant (4)**

Section 96.4(3) – Able and Available
Section 96.6-2 – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant, Laura Downer, filed an appeal from a decision dated April 4, 2011, reference 02. The decision disqualified her from receiving unemployment benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call on October 17, 2012. The claimant participated on her own behalf. The employer, Seabury and Smith, did not provide a telephone number where a witness could be contacted and did not participate. Exhibit D-1 was admitted into the record.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the appeal is timely and whether the claimant is able and available for work.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

A disqualification decision was mailed to the claimant's last-known address of record on April 4, 2011. The claimant received the decision. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by April 14, 2011. The appeal was not filed until September 24, 2012, which is after the date noticed on the decision.

The claimant did receive the decision and took it to her local Workforce Center immediately. The representative told her she would have to provide documentation from her physician she was able and available for work without restrictions. She did so and presented the documentation back at the Workforce Center on April 8, 2011. A second decision was issued on April 11, 2011.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code section 96.6-2 provides in pertinent part:

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. . . . Unless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was mailed to the claimant's last known address, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision.

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).

Pursuant to rules 871 IAC 26.2(96)(1) and 871 IAC 24.35(96)(1), appeals are considered filed when postmarked, if mailed. Messina v. IDJS, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983).

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).

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

The claimant's appeal was not timely but the initial decision was modified in her favor on April 11, 2011.

DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated April 4, 2012, reference 02, is modified in favor of the appellant. The claimant's appeal was not timely, but a subsequent decision found she was able and available for work effective March 27, 2011.

Bonny G. Hendricksmeier
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

bgh/css