

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

JOASH A FITTRO

Claimant

APPEAL 20A-UI-15329-DB-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

SEDONA STAFFING INC

Employer

OC: 07/26/20

Claimant: Respondent (2R)

Iowa Code § 96.5(1)j – Voluntary Quitting – Temporary Employment
Iowa Code § 96.3(7) – Recovery of Benefit Overpayment
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.10 – Employer/Representative Participation Fact-finding Interview
PL 116-136 Sec 2104(B) – Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer/appellant filed an appeal from the November 9, 2020 (reference 03) unemployment insurance decision that allowed benefits to the claimant based upon his separation from employment. The parties were properly notified of the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on January 19, 2021. The claimant, Joash A. Fittro, did not participate. The employer, Sedona Staffing Inc., participated through witness Colleen McGuinty. Employer's Exhibit 1 was admitted. The administrative law judge took official notice of the claimant's unemployment insurance benefits records.

ISSUES:

Did the claimant voluntarily quit by not reporting for an additional work assignment within three business days of the end of the last assignment?

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?

Is the claimant overpaid Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation benefits?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was a temporary employee of this temporary employment firm. Claimant began working for this employer on March 2, 2020. He received a copy of the employer's policy requiring him to notify it if he was seeking additional work after the conclusion of a job assignment. See Ex 1. This policy was separate from his contract of hire.

Claimant was assigned to work at Wilson Precision Steel on a full-time basis. He was ill and unable to work for a few days in July and August of 2020. He was scheduled to return to work on August 10, 2020 after his illness; however, he did not return to work and did not notify anyone of his absence. When the employer telephoned him about not being at work, he stated he had to take his girlfriend to a doctor's appointment and that he would be in to work later in the afternoon. He did not come to work in the afternoon and did not contact the employer about

that absence. The employer notified him by telephone on August 11, 2020 that Wilton Precision Steel had ended his job assignment. He did not request any additional job assignments from this employer. There was continuing work available to the claimant for his to be reassigned.

The claimant's administrative records indicate that he has received unemployment insurance benefits funds by the State of Iowa in the amount of \$1,118.00 from August 9, 2020 through November 7, 2020. The claimant did not receive any Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation benefits. The employer participated in the fact-finding interview in writing by reporting the details of the claimant's separation from employment and attaching a copy of its reassignment policy.

The employer testified that the claimant was not available for work due to illness from July 26, 2020 through August 8, 2020; however, the issue of whether he was able to and available for work from July 26, 2020 through August 8, 2020 has yet to be adjudicated by the Benefits Bureau of Iowa Workforce Development. Whether the claimant was able to and available for work from July 26, 2020 through August 8, 2020 and whether the claimant is overpaid unemployment insurance benefits during that two-week period will be remanded to the Benefits Bureau for an initial investigation and determination.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the separation was disqualifying. Benefits are denied effective August 11, 2020.

Iowa Code § 96.5(1)(j) provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits:

1. Voluntary quitting. If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual's employer, if so found by the department. But the individual shall not be disqualified if the department finds that:

j. (1) The individual is a temporary employee of a temporary employment firm who notifies the temporary employment firm of completion of an employment assignment and who seeks reassignment. Failure of the individual to notify the temporary employment firm of completion of an employment assignment within three working days of the completion of each employment assignment under a contract of hire shall be deemed a voluntary quit unless the individual was not advised in writing of the duty to notify the temporary employment firm upon completion of an employment assignment or the individual had good cause for not contacting the temporary employment firm within three working days and notified the firm at the first reasonable opportunity thereafter.

(2) To show that the employee was advised in writing of the notification requirement of this paragraph, the temporary employment firm shall advise the temporary employee by requiring the temporary employee, at the time of employment with the temporary employment firm, to read and sign a document that provides a clear and concise explanation of the notification requirement and the consequences of a failure to notify. The document shall be separate from any contract of employment and a copy of the signed document shall be provided to the temporary employee.

(3) For the purposes of this paragraph:

(a) "Temporary employee" means an individual who is employed by a temporary employment firm to provide services to clients to supplement their workforce during

absences, seasonal workloads, temporary skill or labor market shortages, and for special assignments and projects.

(b) "Temporary employment firm" means a person engaged in the business of employing temporary employees.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.26(15) provides:

Employee of temporary employment firm.

a. The individual is a temporary employee of a temporary employment firm who notifies the temporary employment firm within three days of completion of an employment assignment and seeks reassignment under the contract of hire. The employee must be advised by the employer of the notification requirement in writing and receive a copy.

b. The individual shall be eligible for benefits under this subrule if the individual has good cause for not contacting the employer within three days and did notify the employer at the first reasonable opportunity.

c. Good cause is a substantial and justifiable reason, excuse or cause such that a reasonable and prudent person, who desired to remain in the ranks of the employed, would find to be adequate justification for not notifying the employer. Good cause would include the employer's going out of business; blinding snow storm; telephone lines down; employer closed for vacation; hospitalization of the claimant; and other substantial reasons.

d. Notification may be accomplished by going to the employer's place of business, telephoning the employer, faxing the employer, or any other currently acceptable means of communications. Working days means the normal days in which the employer is open for business.

The plain language of the statute allows benefits for a claimant "who notifies the temporary employment firm of completion of an assignment and who seeks reassignment." In this case, the claimant was contacted by the employer on August 11, 2020 and was told that his assignment was ended. He did not request reassignment to another position. There was continuing work available. As such, the separation on August 11, 2020 is disqualifying. Benefits are denied effective August 11, 2020. Because benefits are denied, the issues of overpayment and chargeability must be addressed.

Iowa Code § 96.3(7)a-b, as amended in 2008, provides:

7. Recovery of overpayment of benefits.

a. If an individual receives benefits for which the individual is subsequently determined to be ineligible, even though the individual acts in good faith and is not otherwise at fault, the benefits shall be recovered. The department in its discretion may recover the overpayment of benefits either by having a sum equal to the overpayment deducted from any future benefits payable to the individual or by having the individual pay to the department a sum equal to the overpayment.

b. (1)(a) If the department determines that an overpayment has been made, the charge for the overpayment against the employer's account shall be removed and the account shall be credited with an amount equal to the overpayment from the unemployment compensation trust fund and this credit shall include both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5. The employer

shall not be relieved of charges if benefits are paid because the employer or an agent of the employer failed to respond timely or adequately to the department's request for information relating to the payment of benefits. This prohibition against relief of charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers.

(b) However, provided the benefits were not received as the result of fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual, benefits shall not be recovered from an individual if the employer did not participate in the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to section 96.6, subsection 2, and an overpayment occurred because of a subsequent reversal on appeal regarding the issue of the individual's separation from employment.

(2) An accounting firm, agent, unemployment insurance accounting firm, or other entity that represents an employer in unemployment claim matters and demonstrates a continuous pattern of failing to participate in the initial determinations to award benefits, as determined and defined by rule by the department, shall be denied permission by the department to represent any employers in unemployment insurance matters. This subparagraph does not apply to attorneys or counselors admitted to practice in the courts of this state pursuant to section 602.10101.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.10 provides:

Employer and employer representative participation in fact-finding interviews.

(1) "Participate," as the term is used for employers in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means submitting detailed factual information of the quantity and quality that if unrebutted would be sufficient to result in a decision favorable to the employer. The most effective means to participate is to provide live testimony at the interview from a witness with firsthand knowledge of the events leading to the separation. If no live testimony is provided, the employer must provide the name and telephone number of an employee with firsthand information who may be contacted, if necessary, for rebuttal. A party may also participate by providing detailed written statements or documents that provide detailed factual information of the events leading to separation. At a minimum, the information provided by the employer or the employer's representative must identify the dates and particular circumstances of the incident or incidents, including, in the case of discharge, the act or omissions of the claimant or, in the event of a voluntary separation, the stated reason for the quit. The specific rule or policy must be submitted if the claimant was discharged for violating such rule or policy. In the case of discharge for attendance violations, the information must include the circumstances of all incidents the employer or the employer's representative contends meet the definition of unexcused absences as set forth in 871—subrule 24.32(7). On the other hand, written or oral statements or general conclusions without supporting detailed factual information and information submitted after the fact-finding decision has been issued are not considered participation within the meaning of the statute.

(2) "A continuous pattern of nonparticipation in the initial determination to award benefits," pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, as the term is used for an entity representing employers, means on 25 or more occasions in a calendar quarter beginning with the first calendar quarter of 2009, the entity files appeals after failing to participate. Appeals filed but withdrawn before the day of the contested case hearing will not be considered in determining if a continuous pattern of nonparticipation exists. The division administrator shall notify the employer's representative in writing after each such appeal.

(3) If the division administrator finds that an entity representing employers as defined in Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, has engaged in a continuous pattern of nonparticipation, the division administrator shall suspend said representative for a period of up to six months on the first occasion, up to one year on the second occasion and up to ten years on the third or subsequent occasion. Suspension by the division administrator constitutes final agency action and may be appealed pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.19.

(4) "Fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual," as the term is used for claimants in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means providing knowingly false statements or knowingly false denials of material facts for the purpose of obtaining unemployment insurance benefits. Statements or denials may be either oral or written by the claimant. Inadvertent misstatements or mistakes made in good faith are not considered fraud or willful misrepresentation.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 96.3(7)"b" as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2160.

Because the claimant's separation on August 11, 2020 was disqualifying, benefits were paid to which he was not entitled. The unemployment insurance law provides that benefits must be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later determined to be ineligible for those benefits, even though the claimant acted in good faith and was not otherwise at fault. However, the overpayment will not be recovered when it is based on a reversal on appeal of an initial determination to award benefits on an issue regarding the claimant's employment separation if: (1) the benefits were not received due to any fraud or willful misrepresentation by the claimant and (2) the employer did not participate in the initial proceeding to award benefits. The employer will not be charged for benefits if it is determined that they did participate in the fact-finding interview. Iowa Code § 96.3(7).

In this case, the claimant has received benefits but was not eligible for those benefits. Since the employer did participate in the fact-finding interview by submitting detailed factual information of the quantity and quality that if unrebutted would be sufficient to result in a decision favorable to the employer, the claimant is obligated to repay to the agency the regular unemployment insurance benefits he received after the separation from employment, \$1,118.00 from August 9, 2020 through November 7, 2020, and this employer's account may not be charged for those benefits paid. The claimant was not paid any Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation ("FPUC") benefits and therefore any overpayment of FPUC benefits is moot.

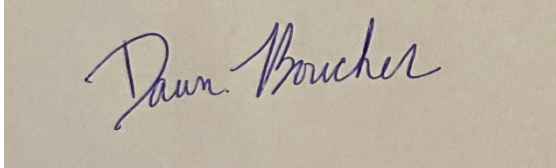
DECISION:

The November 9, 2020 (reference 03) unemployment insurance decision is reversed. The claimant's separation was disqualifying due to the claimant's voluntary quitting of work. Unemployment insurance benefits funded by the State of Iowa are denied effective August 9, 2020 and continuing until claimant has worked in and earned wages for insured work equal to ten times his weekly benefit amount after his August 11, 2020 separation date, and provided he is otherwise eligible.

The claimant has been overpaid unemployment insurance benefits of \$1,118.00 from August 9, 2020 through November 7, 2020 and is obligated to repay the agency those benefits because the employer did participate in the fact-finding interview. The employer's account may not be charged for those benefits paid.

REMAND:

The claimant did not work from July 26, 2020 through August 8, 2020 due to illness but filed weekly continued claims for benefits prior to his permanent separation from employment. The issue of whether the claimant was able to and available for work from July 26, 2020 through August 8, 2020 and whether he is overpaid regular unemployment benefits for those two weeks is remanded to the Benefits Bureau for an initial investigation and determination.



Dawn Boucher
Administrative Law Judge

February 3, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

db/kmj

Note to Claimant

- This decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits funded by the State of Iowa under state law. 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.
- If you do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits funded by the State of Iowa under state law, you may qualify for benefits under the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance ("PUA") section of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act ("Cares Act") that discusses eligibility for claimants who are unemployed due to the Coronavirus.
- **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program.**
For additional information on how to apply for PUA go to:
<https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>.
- If you are denied regular unemployment insurance benefits funded by the State of Iowa and wish to apply for PUA, please visit:
<https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information> and scroll down to "Submit Proof Here." You will fill out the questionnaire regarding the reason you are not working and upload a picture or copy of your fact-finding decision. Your claim will be reviewed for PUA eligibility. If you are eligible for PUA, you will also be eligible for Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) until the program expires. Back payments PUA benefits may automatically be used to repay any overpayment of state benefits. If this does not occur on your claim, you may repay any overpayment by visiting:
<https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/unemployment-insurance-overpayment->

and-recovery.

- If you have applied and have been approved for PUA benefits, this decision will **not** negatively affect your entitlement to PUA benefits.