

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

**JOHN P STIREWALT**  
Claimant

**GARYS TRACTOR & IMPLEMENT INC**  
Employer

**APPEAL 20A-UI-04661-DG-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**OC: 03/22/20**  
**Claimant: Appellant (1)**

Iowa Code § 96.4(3) – Ability to and Availability for Work  
Iowa Code § 96.19(38)b – Definitions – Total, partial unemployment  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(2)j – Benefit Eligibility Conditions – Leave of Absence  
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(10) – Availability Disqualifications – Leave of Absence

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Claimant filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated May 21, 2020, (reference 01) that held claimant not able to and available for work. After due notice, a hearing was scheduled for and held on June 11, 2020. Claimant participated personally. Employer failed to respond to the hearing notice and did not participate. Claimant's Exhibit A was admitted into evidence.

**ISSUE:**

The issue in this matter is whether claimant is able and available for work?

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds: Claimant was not able to work and available to work beginning on March 22, 2020.

Claimant began working for employer as a full-time mechanic in January, 2018. On or about January 6, 2020 claimant requested a leave of absence from work because he was scheduled for surgery for an injury that was not work-related.

Claimant was then scheduled to meet with his doctor on April 2, 2020, but that appointment was postponed until May 26, 2020 because of the covid-19 virus. Claimant might have been back to work earlier, but he was not able to work because he had not been released to work by his physician.

Claimant was later released back to work on May 26, 2020. He went back to work as a full-time mechanic on that date.

## REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes that the claimant is not able to work and available for work effective March 22, 2020.

Iowa Code section 96.4(3) provides:

An unemployed individual shall be eligible to receive benefits with respect to any week only if the department finds that:

3. The individual is able to work, is available for work, and is earnestly and actively seeking work. This subsection is waived if the individual is deemed partially unemployed, while employed at the individual's regular job, as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "b", unnumbered paragraph (1), or temporarily unemployed as defined in section 96.19, subsection 38, paragraph "c". The work search requirements of this subsection and the disqualification requirement for failure to apply for, or to accept suitable work of section 96.5, subsection 3 are waived if the individual is not disqualified for benefits under section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraph "h".

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(1)a provides:

**Benefits eligibility conditions.** For an individual to be eligible to receive benefits the department must find that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work. The individual bears the burden of establishing that the individual is able to work, available for work, and earnestly and actively seeking work.

**(1) Able to work.** An individual must be physically and mentally able to work in some gainful employment, not necessarily in the individual's customary occupation, but which is engaged in by others as a means of livelihood.

*a. Illness, injury or pregnancy.* Each case is decided upon an individual basis, recognizing that various work opportunities present different physical requirements. A statement from a medical practitioner is considered prima facie evidence of the physical ability of the individual to perform the work required. A pregnant individual must meet the same criteria for determining ableness as do all other individuals.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(35) provides:

**Availability disqualifications.** The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

**(35)** Where the claimant is not able to work and is under the care of a medical practitioner and has not been released as being able to work.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.23(10) provides:

**Availability disqualifications.** The following are reasons for a claimant being disqualified for being unavailable for work.

**(10)** The claimant requested and was granted a leave of absence, such period is deemed to be a period of voluntary unemployment and shall be considered ineligible for benefits for such period.

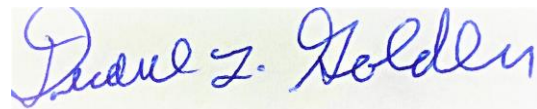
To be able to work, "[a]n individual must be physically and mentally able to work in some gainful employment, not necessarily in the individual's customary occupation, but which is engaged in by others as a means of livelihood." *Sierra v. Emp't Appeal Bd.*, 508 N.W.2d 719, 721 (Iowa 1993); *Geiken v. Lutheran Home for the Aged*, 468 N.W.2d 223 (Iowa 1991); Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.22(1). "An evaluation of an individual's ability to work for the purposes of determining that individual's eligibility for unemployment benefits must necessarily take into consideration the economic and legal forces at work in the general labor market in which the individual resides." *Sierra* at 723. This means that when evaluating whether a person with a protected disability is able and available to work we must take into account the reasonable accommodation requirements imposed on employers under federal, state, and local laws. *Id.*

Claimant has not established his ability to work. Benefits are denied.

*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. Individuals who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits due to disqualifying separations, but who are currently unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19 may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program.** Additional information on how to apply for PUA can be found at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>.

#### DECISION:

The decision of the representative dated May 21, 2020, (reference 01) is affirmed. Claimant is not eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits.



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Duane L. Golden  
Administrative Law Judge

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June 30, 2020  
Decision Dated and Mailed

dlg/sam