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

VICKI L ZOLLMAN
105 E JACKSON
MT AYR IA 50854

RINGGOLD CO FAMILY RESOURCE CNTR
302 N LINCOLN
MT AYR IA 50854

Appeal Number: 04A-UI-12781-MT
OC: 10/31/04 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, 4th 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.

_____
(Administrative Law Judge)

_____
(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 November 22, 2004, reference 01, which held claimant eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on December 21, 2004. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated by Bill Decker, Director, and Debbie Poore, Coordinator. Exhibit One was 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 the employer November 3, 2004.

Employer discharged claimant on November 3, 2004 because of two complaints that happened October 27, 2004 and October 29, 2004. Claimant disciplined children in what the employer believed was an inappropriate manner. Claimant did not grab any child by the arm. Claimant did not raise her voice in an inappropriate manner. The coordinator implied that she would be let go if she did not quit. Claimant specifically told the coordinator that she would rather quit than be fired. Employer did not respond with any statement that discharge was not inevitable. Claimant had a good faith belief that she was going to be fired. Claimant had prior warnings indicating that discharge was eminent.

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.

The administrative law judge holds that the evidence has failed to establish that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct when claimant violated the employer's policy concerning child discipline. Claimant was warned concerning this policy.

The last incident, which brought about the discharge fails to constitute misconduct because claimant's in person and sworn testimony is more credible than the hearsay offered by employer. This is a discharge case as claimant quit in lieu of discharge. Therefore employer has the burden of proof. Claimant's testimony concerning the complaints must be found more credible as it was under oath. Employer has failed to establish incidents of child mistreatment. Therefore, 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 November 22, 2004, reference 01, is affirmed. Unemployment insurance benefits shall be allowed, provided claimant is otherwise eligible.

mdm\smc