

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

ANTHONY E SNYDER

Claimant

APPEAL NO: 11A-UI-10500-ST

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

WEST SIDE TRANSPORT INC

Employer

OC: 07/17/11

Claimant: Appellant (2)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge
871 IAC 24.32(1) – Definition of Misconduct
871 IAC 26.14(7) – Request to Reopen

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant appealed a department decision dated August 4, 2011, reference 01, that held he was discharged for misconduct on May 13, 2011, and benefits are denied. A telephone hearing was held on August 30, 2011. The claimant participated. The employer did not participate.

ISSUE:

Whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct in connection with employment.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The administrative law judge having heard the testimony of the witness, and having considered the evidence in the record, finds: The claimant began employment as a full-time driver on July 29, 1991, and last worked for the employer on May 13, 2011. The claimant had an accident in the employer parking lot involving another truck on May 11, 2011. He was suspended and later discharged on May 13.

The employer failed to respond to the hearing notice prior to the hearing. Employer representative Susan Smith called in after the close of the record without a control number, and acknowledged the employer had failed to call in response to the hearing notice.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

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.

The administrative law judge concludes the employer has failed to establish claimant was discharged for misconduct in connection with employment on May 13, 2011. The employer failed to participate in this hearing and offer evidence of job disqualifying misconduct.

871 IAC 26.14(7) provides:

(7) If a party has not responded to a notice of telephone hearing by providing the appeals section with the names and telephone numbers of its witnesses by the scheduled time of the hearing, the presiding officer may proceed with the hearing.

a. If an absent party responds to the hearing notice while the hearing is in progress, the presiding officer shall pause to admit the party, summarize the hearing to that point, administer the oath, and resume the hearing.

b. If a party responds to the notice of hearing after the record has been closed and any party which has participated is no longer on the telephone line, the presiding officer shall not take the evidence of the late party. Instead, the presiding officer shall inquire as to why the party was late in responding to the notice of hearing. For good cause shown, the presiding officer shall reopen the record and cause further notice of hearing to be issued to all parties of record. The record shall not be reopened if the presiding officer does not find good cause for the party's late response to the notice of hearing.

c. Failure to read or follow the instructions on the notice of hearing shall not constitute good cause for reopening the record.

At issue is a request to reopen the record made after the hearing had concluded. The request to reopen the record is denied because the party making the request failed to participate by reading and following the instructions on the hearing notice.

The failure to call prior to the hearing or the close of the record is not a good cause to reopen.

DECISION:

The department decision dated August 4, 2011, reference 01, is reversed. The claimant was not discharged for misconduct on May 13, 2011. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

Randy L. Stephenson
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

rls/css