

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

CLINT LARSEN
Claimant

APPEAL NO: 08A-UI-08631-ET

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

VAN DIEST SUPPLY CO
Employer

**OC: 07-20-08 R: 01
Claimant: Respondent (2)**

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge/Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed a timely appeal from the September 19, 2008, reference 01, decision that allowed benefits to the claimant. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call before Administrative Law Judge Julie Elder on October 13, 2008. The claimant did not respond to the hearing notice and did not participate in the hearing or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice. Carolyn Cross, Personnel Director and Kevin Spencer, Director of Plant Operations, participated in the hearing on behalf of the employer.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the employer discharged the claimant for work-connected misconduct.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as full-time team leader for Van Diest Supply Company from December 19, 2000 to July 18, 2008. The employer called the claimant to the production manager's office July 18, 2008, to discuss his attendance because he had fallen below two points which resulted in a fifty cent per hour pay decrease. The claimant was asked to sign the disciplinary warning and said, "I'm not signing shit. You can fire me if you want." He then "stormed out" and slammed the door before the employer was done with the meeting. Kevin Spencer, Director of Plant Operations, overheard the conversation and went to his superiors and they decided to terminate the claimant's employment for his behavior in the meeting and refusal to sign the disciplinary action.

The claimant has claimed and received unemployment insurance benefits since his separation from this employer.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment for disqualifying job 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.

The employer has the burden of proving disqualifying misconduct. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). The failure to acknowledge the receipt of a written reprimand by signing it constitutes job misconduct as a matter of law. Green v. IDJS, 299 N.W.2d 651 (Iowa 1980). While the claimant's anger at the disciplinary action in this case is understandable, his reaction was insubordinate, unprofessional and inappropriate. Under these circumstances, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant's conduct demonstrated a willful disregard of the standards of behavior the employer has the right to expect of employees and shows an intentional and substantial disregard of the employer's interests and the employee's duties and obligations to the employer. Furthermore, his refusal to sign the warning is job misconduct as a matter of law. The employer has met its burden of proving disqualifying job misconduct. Cosper v. IDJS, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). Benefits are denied.

The unemployment insurance law provides that benefits must be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later determined to be ineligible for 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 whether or not the overpayment is recovered. Iowa Code section 96.3-7. In this case, the claimant has received benefits but was not eligible for those benefits. The matter of determining the amount of the overpayment and whether the overpayment should be recovered under Iowa Code section 96.3-7-b is remanded to the Agency.

DECISION:

The September 19, 2008, reference 01, decision is reversed. The claimant was discharged from employment due to job-related misconduct. Benefits are withheld until such time as he has worked in and been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times his weekly benefit amount, provided he is otherwise eligible.

Julie Elder
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

je/pjs