

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

JOHN WILLIAMS

Claimant

OPPORTUNITY VILLAGE

Employer

APPEAL 21A-UI-20621-SN-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 06/06/21

Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code § 96.5(1) – Voluntary Quit
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.26(4) – Intolerable working conditions
Iowa Code § 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant filed an appeal from the September 1, 2021, reference 01, unemployment insurance decision that denied benefits based upon her voluntary quit. The parties were properly notified about the hearing. A telephone hearing was held on November 5, 2021. The claimant participated and testified. The employer participated through Margaret Stines and Cindy Imhoff.

ISSUES:

Whether the claimant's appeal is timely? Whether there are reasonable grounds to consider the claimant's appeal otherwise timely?

Was the separation a layoff, discharge for misconduct or voluntary quit without good cause attributable to the employer?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds:

A disqualification decision was mailed to claimant's last known address of record on September 1, 2021. The decision arrived at the claimant's mailbox within ten days. The claimant did not receive it until September 11, 2021 because he decided he was too busy to check his mail. The claimant then decided to rest for the rest of the day before attempting to appeal on September 12, 2021. He attempted to appeal on that day with his phone and was unable to do so. The decision contained a warning that an appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeals Section by September 11, 2021. (Exhibit D-1) The appeal was not filed until September 15, 2021, which is after the date noticed on the disqualification decision. (Exhibit D-2) The claimant explained that he used his laptop to submit the appeal on September 15, 2021.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The administrative law judge concludes the claimant's appeal is untimely. He further concludes it does not have reasonable grounds to be considered otherwise timely.

Iowa Code section 96.6(2) provides:

2. Initial determination. A representative designated by the director shall promptly notify all interested parties to the claim of its filing, and the parties have ten days from the date of issuing the notice of the filing of the claim to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. All interested parties shall select a format as specified by the department to receive such notifications. The representative shall promptly examine the claim and any protest, take the initiative to ascertain relevant information concerning the claim, and, on the basis of the facts found by the representative, shall determine whether or not the claim is valid, the week with respect to which benefits shall commence, the weekly benefit amount payable and its maximum duration, and whether any disqualification shall be imposed. The claimant has the burden of proving that the claimant meets the basic eligibility conditions of section 96.4. The employer has the burden of proving that the claimant is disqualified for benefits pursuant to section 96.5, except as provided by this subsection. The claimant has the initial burden to produce evidence showing that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsections 10 and 11, and has the burden of proving that a voluntary quit pursuant to section 96.5, subsection 1, was for good cause attributable to the employer and that the claimant is not disqualified for benefits in cases involving section 96.5, subsection 1, paragraphs "a" through "h". Unless the claimant or other interested party, after notification or within ten calendar days after notification was issued, files an appeal from the decision, the decision is final and benefits shall be paid or denied in accordance with the decision. If an administrative law judge affirms a decision of the representative, or the appeal board affirms a decision of the administrative law judge allowing benefits, the benefits shall be paid regardless of any appeal which is thereafter taken, but if the decision is finally reversed, no employer's account shall be charged with benefits so paid and this relief from charges shall apply to both contributory and reimbursable employers, notwithstanding section 96.8, subsection 5.

The ten calendar days for appeal begins running on the mailing date. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the representative's decision, unless otherwise corrected immediately below that entry, is presumptive evidence of the date of mailing. *Gaskins v. Unempl. Comp. Bd. of Rev.*, 429 A.2d 138 (Pa. Comm. 1981); *Johnson v. Board of Adjustment*, 239 N.W.2d 873, 92 A.L.R.3d 304 (Iowa 1976).

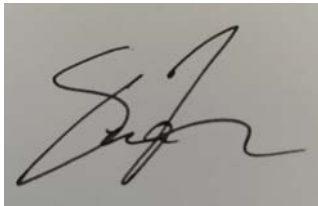
The record in this case shows that more than ten calendar days elapsed between the mailing date and the date this appeal was filed. The Iowa Supreme Court has declared that there is a mandatory duty to file appeals from representatives' decisions within the time allotted by statute, and that the administrative law judge has no authority to change the decision of a representative if a timely appeal is not filed. *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877, 881 (Iowa 1979). Compliance with appeal notice provisions is jurisdictional unless the facts of a case show that the notice was invalid. *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373, 377 (Iowa 1979); see also *In re Appeal of Elliott*, 319 N.W.2d 244, 247 (Iowa 1982). The question in this case thus becomes whether the appellant was deprived of a reasonable opportunity to assert an appeal in a timely fashion. *Hendren v. IESC*, 217 N.W.2d 255 (Iowa 1974); *Smith v. IESC*, 212 N.W.2d 471, 472 (Iowa 1973).

The record shows that the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal. The record shows the delay was attributable to circumstances wholly due to the claimant's decisions and circumstances. The claimant decision did not reach him until September 11, 2021 because the claimant decided he was too busy to check his mail. After receiving the decision, the claimant decided to wait another day because he was tired. While the administrative law judge is sympathetic to the exhaustion of hard work, this does not excuse the claimant from timely filing an appeal.

The administrative law judge concludes that failure to file a timely appeal within the time prescribed by the Iowa Employment Security Law was not due to any Agency error or misinformation or delay or other action of the United States Postal Service pursuant to 871 IAC 24.35(2). The administrative law judge further concludes that the appeal was not timely filed pursuant to Iowa Code § 96.6(2), and the administrative law judge lacks jurisdiction to make a determination with respect to the nature of the appeal. See *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The September 1, 2021, reference 01, decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely, and the decision of the representative remains in effect.



Sean M. Nelson
Administrative Law Judge
Unemployment Insurance Appeals Bureau
1000 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0209
Fax (515) 725-9067

December 8, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

smn/scn