

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

CHRISTOPHER C ANUMASO
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 10A-UI-12205-JTT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

**EZ PAYROLL & STAFFING SOLUTIONS
LLC**
Employer

**OC: 06/20/10
Claimant: Appellant (2)**

Iowa Code Section 96.5(2)(a) – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Christopher Anumaso filed a timely appeal from the August 19, 2010, reference 01, decision that denied benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on October 21, 2010. Claimant participated. The employer had provided the name and number for a representative, but the representative was not available at that number at the time of the hearing.

ISSUE:

Whether the claimant was discharged for misconduct in connection with the employment that disqualifies the claimant for unemployment insurance benefits.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The employer is a staffing agency. The employer placed the claimant in an assignment at company called ALPLA for 11 months. On or about June 12, 2010, the employer discharged Mr. Anumaso from the assignment and the employment for sleeping on the job. The incident that triggered the discharge occurred on or about June 12, 2010 at about 6:00 a.m. at the end of a 12-hour shift. A supervisor assigned Mr. Anumaso to inspect bottles. The work required that Mr. Anumaso sit down. As the supervisor assigned the task, Mr. Anumaso expressed concern that he was tired and did not want to perform sedentary work for that reason. After a while, Mr. Anumaso unintentionally nodded off at his workstation. Shortly, thereafter the supervisor observed Mr. Anumaso asleep at his work station and ended the assignment. The staffing agency told Mr. Anumaso the assignment was ended and that it had no other work for him. Mr. Anumaso had not had any previous instances of nodding off or sleeping at work.

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 employer has the burden of proof in this matter. See Iowa Code section 96.6(2). Misconduct must be substantial in order to justify a denial of unemployment benefits. Misconduct serious enough to warrant the discharge of an employee is not necessarily serious enough to warrant a denial of unemployment benefits. See Lee v. Employment Appeal Board, 616 N.W.2d 661 (Iowa 2000). The focus is on deliberate, intentional, or culpable acts by the employee. See Gimbel v. Employment Appeal Board, 489 N.W.2d 36, 39 (Iowa Ct. App. 1992).

While past acts and warnings can be used to determine the magnitude of the current act of misconduct, a discharge for misconduct cannot be based on such past act(s). The termination of employment must be based on a current act. See 871 IAC 24.32(8). In determining whether the conduct that prompted the discharge constituted a "current act," the administrative law judge considers the date on which the conduct came to the attention of the employer and the date on which the employer notified the claimant that the conduct subjected the claimant to possible discharge. See also Greene v. EAB, 426 N.W.2d 659, 662 (Iowa App. 1988).

Allegations of misconduct or dishonesty without additional evidence shall not be sufficient to result in disqualification. If the employer is unwilling to furnish available evidence to corroborate the allegation, misconduct cannot be established. See 871 IAC 24.32(4). When it is in a party's power to produce more direct and satisfactory evidence than is actually produced, it may fairly be inferred that the more direct evidence will expose deficiencies in that party's case. See Crosser v. Iowa Dept. of Public Safety, 240 N.W.2d 682 (Iowa 1976).

Sleeping on the job may constitute misconduct that would disqualify a claim for unemployment insurance benefits. See Hurtado v. IDJS, 393 N.W.2d 309 (Iowa 1986). In Hurtado, the

employer had discovered the employee sleeping on the job twice, with the instances occurring approximately one year apart.

The employer failed to appear for the hearing and thereby failed to present any evidence to support an allegation of misconduct. The evidence in the record indicates that this was an isolated incident of Mr. Anumaso unintentionally nodding off at his work station at the end of a 12-hour overnight shift. The conduct was not intentional and did not constitute misconduct in connection the employment. Based on the evidence in the record and application of the appropriate law, the administrative law judge concludes that the claimant was discharged for no disqualifying reason. Accordingly, the claimant is eligible for benefits, provided he is otherwise eligible. The employer's account may be charged for benefits paid to the claimant.

DECISION:

The Agency representative's August 19, 2010, reference 01, decision is reversed. The claimant was discharged for no disqualifying reason. The claimant is eligible for benefits, provided he is otherwise eligible. The employer's account may be charged.

James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/css