

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

KAREN J WILKINS
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 09A-UI-07342-MT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

FBG SERVICE CORPORATION
Employer

OC: 04/05/09
Claimant: Respondent (1)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Employer filed an appeal from a decision of a representative dated May 4, 2009, reference 01, which held claimant eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. After due notice, a telephone conference hearing was scheduled for and held on June 8, 2009. Claimant participated personally. Employer participated by Josh Burrows, Talx Attorney with witnesses Tina Donatsch, Operations Manager and Tony McGrath, Area Supervisor. Exhibit One was admitted into evidence.

ISSUE:

The issue in this matter is whether claimant was discharged for misconduct.

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 employer on April 6, 2009.

Claimant was discharged on April 6, 2009 by employer because claimant was making personal calls on her cell phone while working. Claimant had two prior warnings for making too many personal calls from work. Claimant was on notice that she could face discharge if she made personal calls from work. Claimant did receive one personal call from work. Claimant in fact did not initiate the call but received a medical emergency call from a family member on the date in question. The call lasted five minutes.

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.

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 gravity of the incident, number of policy violations and prior warnings are factors considered when analyzing misconduct. The lack of a current warning may detract from a finding of an intentional policy violation.

In this matter, the evidence fails to establish that claimant was discharged for an act of misconduct when claimant violated employer's policy concerning absenteeism. Claimant was warned concerning this policy.

The last incident, which brought about the discharge, fails to constitute misconduct because employer did not prove that claimant made too many calls from work. Claimant provided sworn testimony that she used her cell phone for only five minutes and only while on break. Employer had hearsay showing excessive use of the cell phone. The sworn testimony is more credible than the hearsay offered. As such, claimant's version is found correct. The administrative law judge holds that 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 May 4, 2009, reference 01, is affirmed. Claimant is eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits, provided claimant meets all other eligibility requirements.

Marlon Mormann
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

mdm/pjs