

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

PAPPAS, TERESA, A
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 13A-UI-02449-JTT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

VANGENT INC
Employer

OC: 07/01/12
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code Section 96.5(2)(a) - Discharge for Misconduct
Iowa Code Section 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

Teresa Pappas filed an appeal from the February 18, 2013, reference 04, decision that denied benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on March 27, 2013. Ms. Pappas participated. The employer did not respond to the hearing notice instructions to provide a telephone number for the hearing and did not participate. Department Exhibits D-1 and D-2 were received into evidence.

ISSUE:

Whether Ms. Pappas' appeal was timely. It was not.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: On February 18, 2013, Iowa Workforce Development mailed a copy of the February 18, 2013, reference 04, decision to Teresa Pappas at her last-known address of record. Ms. Pappas received the decision on February 20, 2013. The decision denied benefits. The decision contained a warning that an appeal from the decision must be postmarked by February 28, 2013 or received by Iowa Workforce Development Appeals Section by that date. On February 28, 2013, Ms. Pappas drafted for appeal letter. On March 1, 2013, Ms. Pappas faxed her appeal to the Appeals Section with a cover sheet that she dated March 1, 2013. The fax transmission information put on the top of each page of the appeal packet by the transmitting fax machine at Copyworks indicates the appeal was faxed on March 1, 2013 at 4:46 p.m. Ms. Pappas made one trip to Copyworks to fax her appeal and stayed until she confirmed it had been successfully transmitted. The Appeals Section received the appeal on March 1, 2013.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

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 mailing the notice of the filing of the claim by ordinary mail to the last known address to protest payment of benefits to the claimant. 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, subsection 10, 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 mailed to the claimant's last known address, 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-day deadline for appeal begins to run on the date Workforce Development mails the decision to the parties. The "decision date" found in the upper right-hand portion of the Agency 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).

An appeal submitted by mail is deemed filed on the date it is mailed as shown by the postmark or in the absence of a postmark the postage meter mark of the envelope in which it was received, or if not postmarked or postage meter marked or if the mark is illegible, on the date entered on the document as the date of completion. See 871 AC 24.35(1)(a). See also Messina v. IDJS, 341 N.W.2d 52 (Iowa 1983). An appeal submitted by any other means is deemed filed on the date it is received by the Unemployment Insurance Division of Iowa Workforce Development. See 871 IAC 24.35(1)(b).

The appeal in this case was filed on March 1, 2013, when the Appeals Section received the faxed appeal.

The evidence in the record establishes 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 Ms. Pappas did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely appeal. At the time Ms. Pappas received her copy of the decision on February 20, 2013, she still had eight days in which to file a timely appeal. The weight of the evidence indicates Ms. Pappas drafted her appeal on the day it was due, but did not take steps to fax it until the day after it was due.

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

DECISION:

The Agency representative's February 18, 2013, reference 04, decision is affirmed. The claimant's appeal was untimely. The decision that disqualified the claimant for unemployment insurance benefits remains in effect.

James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

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