

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

SHERRY M RODRIGUEZ
Claimant

APPEAL NO. 14A-UI-09465-JTT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

TRI CITY ELECTRIC CO OF IOWA
Employer

OC: 06/09/13
Claimant: Respondent (1-R)

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

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The employer filed an appeal from the June 25, 2013, reference 01, decision that allowed benefits to the claimant provided she was otherwise eligible, and that held the employer's account could be charged for benefits, based on an Agency conclusion that the claimant has been discharged on June 10, 2013 for no disqualifying reason. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on October 2, 2014. Claimant participated. Attorney Mikki Schiltz represented the employer and presented testimony through Maria Schirm and Kirby Zam. The hearing in this matter was consolidated with the hearing in Appeal Number 14A-UI-09466-JTT. Exhibits One through 10 and A were received into evidence.

ISSUE:

Whether the appeal was timely. Whether there is good cause to treat the appeal as timely.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The parties stipulate that the employer received the June 25, 2013, reference 01, decision in a timely manner prior to the deadline for appeal and elected not to file an appeal by the deadline. The employer did not intend to challenge the claimant's eligibility for benefits during the claim year that started June 9, 2013 and, for that reason, did not file an appeal from the June 25, 2013, reference 01, decision by the July 5, 2013 deadline.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

Iowa Code § 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 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 the appellant did have a reasonable opportunity to file a timely 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. 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 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 claims deputy's June 25, 2013, reference 01, decision is affirmed. The appeal in this case was not timely. The decision of the claims deputy that allowed benefits to the claimant, provided she was otherwise eligible and that held the employer's account could be charged for benefits, based on the non-disqualifying separation remains in effect.

The employer raises the issue of whether the payments the employer made to the claimant as severance, and reported to Workforce Development as wages, should be treated as base period wages for purposes of determining the claimant's eligibility for benefits during a second benefit year that started August 24, 2014. That matter is remanded the Benefits Bureau for adjudication.

James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/pjs