

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

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

TIN TUN
Claimant

APPEAL NO: 13A-UI-13027-ET

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

TYSON FRESH MEATS INC
Employer

OC: 10/20/13
Claimant: Appellant (2)

Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge/Misconduct

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant filed a timely appeal from the November 20, 2013, reference 01, decision that denied benefits. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held by telephone conference call before Administrative Law Judge Julie Elder on December 17, 2013. The claimant participated in the hearing with Interpreter Aung See. The employer provided a phone number prior to the hearing but was not available at that number at the time of the hearing and did not participate in the hearing or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice.

ISSUE:

The issue is whether the employer discharged the claimant for work-connected misconduct.

FINDINGS OF FACT:

Having reviewed all of the evidence in the record, the administrative law judge finds: The claimant was employed as a full-time production worker for Tyson Fresh Meats from October 25, 2001 to October 15, 2013. On October 15, 2013, the claimant's supervisor directed him to help move some heavy boxes and then switch places with another employee. The claimant told his supervisor if he had to move the boxes he was going to stay in his position and would not move to the other position. His supervisor told him he could either follow the instructions he was given or go and wait in the break room. The claimant chose to wait in the break room rather than move the boxes and then proceed to the other position and his employment was subsequently terminated for disobedience. The claimant had not received any previous written or verbal warnings during his tenure with Tyson Fresh Meats.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

For the reasons that follow, the administrative law judge concludes the claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason.

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 proving disqualifying misconduct. Cosper v. Iowa Department of Job Service, 321 N.W.2d 6 (Iowa 1982). The propriety of a discharge is not at issue in an unemployment insurance case. An employer may be justified in discharging an employee, but the employee's conduct may not amount to misconduct precluding the payment of unemployment compensation. The law limits disqualifying misconduct to substantial and willful wrongdoing or repeated carelessness or negligence that equals willful misconduct in culpability. Lee v. Employment Appeal Board, 616 N.W.2d 661, 665 (Iowa 2000).

When misconduct is alleged as the reason for the discharge and subsequent disqualification of benefits, it is incumbent upon the employer to present evidence in support of its allegations. Allegations of misconduct without additional evidence shall not be sufficient to result in disqualification. 871 IAC 24.32(4). The employer did not participate in the hearing and failed to provide any evidence. The evidence provided by the claimant does not rise to the level of disqualifying job misconduct as that term is defined by Iowa law. While the claimant did refuse a supervisor's direct instruction, the claimant had not received any previous verbal or written warnings, making this incident an isolated incident of poor judgment on his part. Under these circumstances, the administrative law judge must conclude the employer has not met its burden of proof. Therefore, benefits must be allowed.

DECISION:

The November 20, 2013, reference 01, decision is reversed. The claimant was discharged from employment for no disqualifying reason. Benefits are allowed, provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

Julie Elder
Administrative Law Judge

Decision Dated and Mailed

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