

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

BRAD GUYER
Claimant

ACT INC
Employer

APPEAL NO. 21A-UI-22917-JTT

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

OC: 06/07/20
Claimant: Appellant (1)

Iowa Code Section 96.6(2) – Timeliness of Appeal
Iowa Code Section 96.4(3) – Able & Available

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant, Brad Guyer, filed a late appeal from the December 17, 2020, reference 01, decision that denied benefits effective June 7, 2020, based on the deputy's conclusion that the claimant requested and was granted a leave of absence, was voluntarily unemployed, and was not available for work. After due notice was issued, a hearing was held on December 9, 2021. The claimant participated. Mark Larson represented the employer. There were three appeal numbers set for a consolidated hearing: 21A-UI 22917-JTT, 21A-UI-22918-JTT, and 21A-UI-22919-JTT. Exhibit A was received into evidence. The administrative law judge took official notice of the following Agency administrative records: DBRO, KCCO, KPYX, the reference 01 fact-finding interview materials, and the reference 01, 02 and 03 decisions.

ISSUE:

Whether the appeal from the December 17, 2020, reference 01, decision 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: On December 17, 2020, Iowa Workforce Development Benefits Bureau mailed the December 17, 2020, reference 01, decision to the claimant's Iowa City last-known address of record. The reference 01 decision denied benefits effective June 7, 2020, based on the deputy's conclusion that the claimant requested and was granted a leave of absence, was voluntarily unemployed, and was not available for work. The reference 01 decision stated that the decision would become final unless an appeal was postmarked by December 27, 2020 or was received by the appeal section by that date. The reference 01 decision also stated that if the appeal deadline fell on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the appeal period would be extended to the next working day. December 27, 2020 was a Sunday and the next working day was Monday, December 28, 2020. The claimant received the reference 01 decision in a timely manner, prior to the deadline for appeal. The claimant did not take steps to file an appeal from the reference 01 decision by the December 28, 2020 extended appeal deadline or at any point before October 15, 2021.

On October 13, 2021, Iowa Workforce Development Benefits Bureau mailed two overpayment decisions to the claimant. The claimant's receipt of the overpayment decisions prompted the claimant's appeal. On October 15, 2021, the claimant completed and transmitted an online appeal. The Appeals Bureau received the appeal on October 15, 2021 and treated it as an appeal from all three decisions.

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, subsections 10 and 11, 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 Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(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 Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(1)(b).

The claimant's appeal was filed on October 15, 2021, when the Appeals Bureau received the online 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).

No submission shall be considered timely if the delay in filing was unreasonable, as determined by the division after considering the circumstances in the case. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(2)(c).

The evidence in the record establishes an untimely appeal from the December 17, 2020, reference 01, decision. The claimant received the decision in a timely manner, had a reasonable opportunity to file an appeal by the applicable deadline, and unreasonably delayed filing the appeal to October 15, 2021, approximately 10 months after the applicable appeal deadline. The late filing of the appeal was not attributable to Iowa Workforce Development or to the United States Postal Service. There is not good cause to treat the late appeal as a timely appeal. See Iowa Administrative Code rule 871-24.35(2). Because the appeal was untimely, the Administrative Law Judge lacks jurisdiction to disturb the December 17, 2020, reference 01 decision. See *Beardslee v. IDJS*, 276 N.W.2d 373 (Iowa 1979) and *Franklin v. IDJS*, 277 N.W.2d 877 (Iowa 1979).

DECISION:

The claimant's appeal from the December 17, 2020, reference 01, decision was untimely. The decision that denied benefits effective June 7, 2020, based on the deputy's conclusion that the claimant requested and was granted a leave of absence, was voluntarily unemployed, and was not available for work, remains in effect.



James E. Timberland
Administrative Law Judge

January 19th, 202
Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/rs

Note to Claimant: This decision determines you are not eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits. If you disagree with this decision, you may file an appeal to the Employment Appeal Board by following the instructions on the first page of this decision. Individuals who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits, but who are unemployed for reasons related to COVID-19, may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). **You will need to apply for PUA to determine your eligibility under the program.** Additional information on how to apply for PUA can be found at <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/pua-information>.