

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS BUREAU**

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

**REBECCA M WEBSTER**  
Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 19A-UI-04491-S1-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**FOCUS SERVICES LLC**  
Employer

**OC: 05/05/19**  
**Claimant: Respondent (2)**

Section 96.5-1 - Voluntary Quit  
Section 96.5-2-a – Discharge for Misconduct  
Section 96.3-7 – Overpayment

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

Focus Services (employer) appealed a representative's May 21, 2019, decision (reference 01) that concluded Rebecca Webster (claimant) was eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits. After hearing notices were mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record, a telephone hearing was held on June 27, 2019. The claimant did not provide a telephone number where she could be reached and, therefore, did not participate. The employer participated by Naomi Strange, Human Resources Assistant, and Angie Pratt, Human Resources Assistant.

**ISSUE:**

The issue is whether the claimant was separated from employment for any disqualifying reason.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The administrative law judge, having heard the testimony and considered all of the evidence in the record, finds that: The claimant worked for the employer from January 16 to April 21, 2019, as a full-time customer service and sales agent. She stopped appearing for work or reporting her absences after April 21, 2019. The employer attempted but could not make contact with the claimant. On May 2, 2019, the employer considered the claimant to have quit work. Continued work was available for the claimant had she not resigned.

The claimant filed for unemployment insurance benefits with an effective date of May 5, 2019. She received \$1,183.00 in benefits after the separation from employment. On May 14, 2019, the employer provided a corrected telephone number of Angie Pratt as the person who would participate in the fact-finding interview on May 20, 2019. The fact finder did not call the number the employer provided. The employer provided documents for the fact finding interview indicating the claimant quit work.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

For the following reasons the administrative law judge concludes the claimant did voluntarily quit work without good cause attributable to the employer.

Iowa Code section 96.5(1) provides:

An individual shall be disqualified for benefits, regardless of the source of the individual's wage credits:

1. Voluntary quitting. If the individual has left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the individual's employer, if so found by the department.

A voluntary leaving of employment requires an intention to terminate the employment relationship accompanied by an overt act of carrying out that intention. *Local Lodge #1426 v. Wilson Trailer*, 289 N.W.2d 608, 612 (Iowa 1980). The claimant's intention to voluntarily leave work was evidenced by her actions. She told the employer she was leaving and quit work. Her leaving was without good cause attributable to the employer. The claimant voluntarily quit without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are denied.

The unemployment insurance law requires benefits be recovered from a claimant who receives benefits and is later denied benefits even if the claimant acted in good faith and was not at fault. However, a claimant will not have to repay an overpayment when an initial decision to award benefits on an employment separation issue is reversed on appeal if two conditions are met: (1) the claimant did not receive the benefits due to fraud or willful misrepresentation, and (2) the employer failed to participate in the initial proceeding that awarded benefits. In addition, if a claimant is not required to repay an overpayment because the employer failed to participate in the initial proceeding, the employer's account will be charged for the overpaid benefits. Iowa Code section 96.3(7)a, b.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.10 provides:

Employer and employer representative participation in fact-finding interviews.

(1) "Participate," as the term is used for employers in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means submitting detailed factual information of the quantity and quality that if unrebutted would be sufficient to result in a decision favorable to the employer. The most effective means to participate is to provide live testimony at the interview from a witness with firsthand knowledge of the events leading to the separation. If no live testimony is provided, the employer must provide the name and telephone number of an employee with firsthand information who may be contacted, if necessary, for rebuttal. A party may also participate by providing detailed written statements or documents that provide detailed factual information of the events leading to separation. At a minimum, the information provided by the employer or the employer's representative must identify the dates and particular circumstances of the incident or incidents, including, in the case of discharge, the act or omissions of the claimant or, in the event of a voluntary separation, the stated reason for the quit. The specific rule or policy must be submitted if the claimant was discharged for violating such rule or policy. In the case of discharge for attendance violations, the information must include the circumstances of all incidents the employer or the employer's representative contends meet the definition of unexcused absences as set forth in 871—subrule 24.32(7). On the other hand, written or oral statements or general conclusions without supporting detailed factual information and information submitted after the fact-finding decision has been issued are not considered participation within the meaning of the statute.

(2) "A continuous pattern of nonparticipation in the initial determination to award benefits," pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, as the term is used for an entity representing employers, means on 25 or more occasions in a calendar quarter

beginning with the first calendar quarter of 2009, the entity files appeals after failing to participate. Appeals filed but withdrawn before the day of the contested case hearing will not be considered in determining if a continuous pattern of nonparticipation exists. The division administrator shall notify the employer's representative in writing after each such appeal.

(3) If the division administrator finds that an entity representing employers as defined in Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, has engaged in a continuous pattern of nonparticipation, the division administrator shall suspend said representative for a period of up to six months on the first occasion, up to one year on the second occasion and up to ten years on the third or subsequent occasion. Suspension by the division administrator constitutes final agency action and may be appealed pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.19.

(4) "Fraud or willful misrepresentation by the individual," as the term is used for claimants in the context of the initial determination to award benefits pursuant to Iowa Code section 96.6, subsection 2, means providing knowingly false statements or knowingly false denials of material facts for the purpose of obtaining unemployment insurance benefits. Statements or denials may be either oral or written by the claimant. Inadvertent misstatements or mistakes made in good faith are not considered fraud or willful misrepresentation.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 96.3(7)"b" as amended by 2008 Iowa Acts, Senate File 2160.

The claimant has received unemployment insurance benefits that she was not entitled to receive. The employer participated in the fact finding interview to the best of its ability and is not chargeable. The claimant is overpaid unemployment insurance benefits.

**DECISION:**

The representative's May 21, 2019, decision (reference 01) is reversed. The claimant voluntarily left work without good cause attributable to the employer. Benefits are withheld until the claimant has worked in and has been paid wages for insured work equal to ten times the claimant's weekly benefit amount provided the claimant is otherwise eligible.

The claimant has received unemployment insurance benefits that she was not entitled to receive. The employer participated in the fact finding interview to the best of its ability and is not chargeable. The claimant is overpaid unemployment insurance benefits.

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Beth A. Scheetz  
Administrative Law Judge

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Decision Dated and Mailed

bas/rvs