

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

**LEON ARMSTRONG**

Claimant

**APPEAL NO. 22A-UI-04191-JT-T**

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
DECISION**

**VONACHEN SERVICES INC**

Employer

**OC: 01/16/22**

**Claimant: Respondent (6)**

Iowa Code Section 96.6-2 - Timeliness of Protest

Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) – Dismissal of Appeal on Default

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE:**

On February 8, 2022, the employer filed a timely appeal from the February 4, 2022 (reference 03) decision that allowed benefits to the claimant, provided he was otherwise eligible, that held the employer's account could be charged for benefits, and that held the employer's protest could not be considered because it was untimely. A notice of hearing was mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record for a telephone hearing scheduled for 1:00 p.m. on March 17, 2022. Neither party participated. Neither party complied with the hearing notice instructions to call the toll-free number at the time of the hearing. Based upon the employer/appellant's failure to participate in the hearing and the law, the administrative law judge enters the following findings of fact, reasoning and conclusions of law and decision.

**ISSUE:**

Whether the appeal should be dismissed based on the employer/appellant's failure to appear and participate.

**FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The employer is the appellant in this matter. The parties were properly notified of the scheduled hearing for this appeal. The employer/appellant failed to call the toll-free number listed on the hearing notice at the time of the hearing. The employer/appellant did not participate or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice.

The hearing notice instruction advised parties of the date and time of hearing. It also stated:

**IMPORTANT NOTICE!**

**YOU MUST CALL** the toll-free number: **866-783-7021** at the time of the hearing. When instructed, enter the PIN Number ... followed by the pound key [#] and wait for the administrative law judge to begin the hearing.

The administrative law judge **WILL NOT** call you for the hearing, you **MUST** call into the number provided above to participate. **Failure to participate in the hearing may result in the dismissal of your appeal.**

The back page of the hearing notice provides further instruction and warning:

**Failure to Participate or Register for Appeal Hearing**

If you do not participate in the hearing, the judge may dismiss the appeal or issue a decision without considering your evidence. The Appeals Bureau will not call you to participate in the hearing. Instructions for participating are on the other side of this page. 871 IAC 26.14(7)

An insert was sent along with the hearing notice stating:

**ATTENTION!**

**Instructions for participating in a hearing have changed.**

Please review the enclosed hearing notice carefully and follow the instructions on how to join the call on the scheduled day and time of the hearing.

As a courtesy to the employer/appellant, the record was left open until 1:19 p.m. to give the employer/appellant a reasonable opportunity to participate.

The February 4, 2022 (reference 03) decision allowed benefits to the claimant, provided he was otherwise eligible, held the employer's account could be charged for benefits, and held the employer's protest could not be considered because it was untimely.

**REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:**

The Iowa Administrative Procedure Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides that if a party fails to appear or participate in a hearing after proper service of notice, the judge may enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party.

Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) provides:

(7) If a party has not responded to a notice of telephone hearing by providing the appeals bureau with the names and telephone numbers of the persons who are participating in the hearing by the scheduled starting time of the hearing or is not available at the telephone number provided, the presiding officer may proceed with the hearing. If the appealing party fails to provide a telephone number or is unavailable for the hearing, the presiding officer may decide the appealing party is in default and dismiss the appeal as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.12(3). The record may be reopened if the absent party makes a request to reopen the hearing in writing under subrule 26.8(3) and shows good cause for reopening the hearing.

In this case, the employer/appellant did not call the toll-free number listed on the hearing notice at the time of the hearing. The employer/appellant is in default. The appeal should be dismissed.

If the employer/appellant disagrees with this decision, the employer/appellant may appeal the decision to the Employment Appeal Board pursuant to the instructions on the first page of this decision.

**DECISION:**

The employer defaulted on the appeal. The appeal is dismissed. The February 4, 2022 (reference 03) decision that allowed benefits to the claimant, provided he was otherwise eligible, that held the employer's account could be charged for benefits, and that held the employer's protest could not be considered because it was untimely remains in effect.



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March 29, 2022  
Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/kmj