

**IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE APPEALS**

STEVEN GOUTHIERE
Claimant

APPEAL NO: 21A-UI-16969-JT-T

**ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE
DECISION**

PELLA CORPORATION
Employer

**OC: 04/11/21
Claimant: Appellant (6)**

Iowa Code § 96.5(2)(a) – Discharge for Misconduct
Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) – Default Decision
Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-26.14(7) – Dismissal of Appeal on Default

STATEMENT OF THE CASE:

The claimant, Steven Gouthiere, filed a timely appeal from the July 22, 2021, reference 01, decision that held the claimant was disqualified for benefits and the employer's account would not be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion that the claimant was discharged on February 12, 2021 for violation of a known company rule. A notice of hearing was mailed to the parties' last-known addresses of record for a telephone hearing to be held at 8:00 a.m. on September 23, 2021. A review of the Appeals Bureau's conference call system indicates that the claimant/appellant failed to respond to the hearing notice instructions to register a telephone number at which the claimant could be reached for the hearing. Employer representative Loren Van Zanten registered a number for the hearing at 8:16 a.m. and became available for the hearing at that time. Based upon the claimant/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:

Should the appeal be dismissed based upon the claimant/appellant not participating in the hearing?

FINDINGS OF FACT:

The claimant, Steven Gouthiere, is the appellant in this matter. The claimant was properly notified of the appeal hearing set for 8:00 a.m. on September 23, 2021 through the hearing notice that was mailed to the claimant's last-known address of record on September 3, 2021. The claimant did not participate in the hearing or request a postponement of the hearing as required by the hearing notice. The claimant did not comply with the hearing notice instructions to register a telephone number at which the claimant could be reached for the hearing. The claimant did not provide a telephone number in the claimant's appeal. The claimant has not otherwise provided the Appeals Bureau with a telephone number since filing the appeal. However, the claimant registered a number for witness James Kluthe on September 22, 2021. At the time of the appeal hearing, the administrative law judge contacted Mr. Kluthe at the

registered number. Mr. Kluthe stated that the claimant was not with him, that the claimant resided elsewhere, and that the claimant had told Mr. Kluthe that someone might be calling him. Employer representative Loren Van Zanten registered a number for the hearing at 8:16 a.m. and became available for the hearing at that time. The administrative law judge closed the hearing record at 8:17 a.m. and dismissed the employer at that time. The administrative law judge had asked Mr. Kluthe to remain available for the hearing until to 8:15 a.m. and had told Mr. Kluthe he could assume there would be no hearing if he did not hear from the administrative law judge by 8:20 a.m.

The July 22, 2021, reference 01, decision held the claimant was disqualified for benefits and the employer's account would not be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion that the claimant was discharged on February 12, 2021 for violation of a known company rule.

REASONING AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

The Iowa Administrative Procedures Act at Iowa Code § 17A.12(3) provides in pertinent part:

If a party fails to appear or participate in a contested case proceeding after proper service of notice, the presiding officer may, if no adjournment is granted, enter a default decision or proceed with the hearing and make a decision in the absence of the party. ... If a decision is rendered against a party who failed to appear for the hearing and the presiding officer is timely requested by that party to vacate the decision for good cause, the time for initiating a further appeal is stayed pending a determination by the presiding officer to grant or deny the request. If adequate reasons are provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall vacate the decision and, after proper service of notice, conduct another evidentiary hearing. If adequate reasons are not provided showing good cause for the party's failure to appear, the presiding officer shall deny the motion to vacate.

Iowa Administrative Code rule 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 provide 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.

a. If an absent party responds to the hearing notice while the hearing is in progress, the presiding officer shall pause to admit the party, summarize the hearing to that point, administer the oath, and resume the hearing.

b. If a party responds to the notice of hearing after the record has been closed and any party which has participated is no longer on the telephone line, the presiding officer shall not take the evidence of the late party.

c. Failure to read or follow the instructions on the notice of hearing shall not constitute good cause for reopening the record.

The claimant/appellant appealed the representative's decision but failed to participate in the hearing. The claimant/appellant has therefore defaulted on the appeal pursuant to Iowa Code §17A.12(3) and Iowa Admin. Code r. 871-24.14(7), and the representative's decision remains in force and effect.

DECISION:

The claimant defaulted on the appeal. The appeal is dismissed. The July 22, 2021, reference 01, decision that held the claimant was disqualified for benefits and the employer's account would not be charged for benefits, based on the deputy's conclusion that the claimant was discharged on February 12, 2021 for violation of a known company rule, remains in effect.



James E. Timberland
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September 24, 2021
Decision Dated and Mailed

jet/ol